THE TIMES

Friday September 8 2023 | thetimes.co.uk | No 74196

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BRICKS &MORTAR

The 5-star must-see film The Oscar is in the bag Times2

Charles thanks nation for love and support in first year as King

Valentine Low

The King thanks the nation today for the "love and support" shown to him and his wife as he marks one year since the death of Queen Elizabeth.

Charles, who is spending the day with Queen Camilla and other members of his family in "quiet reflection" at Balmoral Castle, released a brief statement in which he spoke of his great affection for his mother. He also released one of his favourite photographs of her, by Cecil Beaton from 1968.

A source told The Times that Charles was working his officials harder than they had been used to in the final years of his mother's reign: "It has surprised some people at Buckingham Palace how much more work is being expected." The source also said that after an initial period of nervousness it was felt Charles had settled into the role. One friend said: "He looks ten years younger and he has got a real sense of purpose."

The King said: "In marking the first anniversary of Her late Majesty's death and my accession, we recall with great affection her long life, devoted service and all she meant to so many of us. I am deeply grateful, too, for the love and support that has been shown to my wife and myself during this year as we do our utmost to be of service to you all."

The Prince and Princess of Wales will visit St Davids in Pembrokeshire today for a private service at the cathedral before speaking to local people who met Queen Elizabeth.

The Duke of Sussex was visibly emotional last night as he paid tribute to his grandmother at the WellChild charity awards in London, of which he is a patron. Prince Harry gave a short speech and paused to clear his throat as he told the audience: "She is looking down on us all tonight."

Out of Mama's shadow, pages 12-13
The monarchy must evolve to retain our affection, leading article, page 25

Baby deaths 'cover-up' investigated by the police

Nottingham trust accused of failing 1,700 families

Eleanor Hayward Health Correspondent
Kat Lay Health Editor

The police are to investigate an alleged far-reaching cover-up by hospital managers as part of a criminal inquiry into the largest NHS maternity scandal.

Cases involving more than 1,700 mothers or babies who have potentially suffered avoidable harm at Nottingham University Hospitals Trust over the past decade are part of a major review.

Nottinghamshire police announced yesterday that they would work alongside that review, led by the senior midwife Donna Ockenden, to investigate maternity services at the trust and that her review would not have to be paused while they carried out inquiries.

As well as investigating the individual circumstances where babies died or were harmed, the police are expected to examine the actions of senior staff to determine if they staged a cover-up and lied to families who lost their children in appalling circumstances.

It comes after NHS scandals involving similar allegations, including failures at the Countess of Chester Hospital which allowed the neonatal nurse Lucy Letby to continue murdering babies. She was jailed for life last month for the murder of seven babies and the attempted murder of six others.

Independent investigations into other NHS scandals — including at Morecambe Bay, East Kent and Shrewsbury and Telford — have revealed evidence of cover-ups and the silencing of families. However, there has never been a successful criminal prosecution of the hospital leaders involved, and many have gone on to other jobs in the health service.

Police are expected to investigate whether staff at Nottingham breached "duty of candour" regulations, introduced in 2014, requiring them be open and transparent to families. Lawyers suggested the Nottingham trust could face corporate manslaughter charges, and individual staff could be charged with gross negligence manslaughter.

Edward Henry KC said: "It is difficult to think of a more comprehensive alleged failure than an entire NHS trust failing 1,700 families."

The police investigation comes after years of campaigning for justice by bereaved parents, led by Dr Jack Hawkins and his wife, Sarah, who had both worked at the Nottingham trust. The couple lost their baby daughter Harriet in 2016 and since then have called for the police to investigate.

The trust initially refused to accept responsibility but paid a £2.8 million negligence settlement in 2021 after an external report identified 13 catastrophic failures in care that led to Harriet's death.

A statement issued on behalf of affected families said: "We welcome the long-awaited news of this police investigation and we are very grateful to

Continued on page 2



The fugitive Daniel Khalife during his army training, which police believe may be helping him evade capture after his escape from Wandsworth jail on Wednesday

CCTV clue in hunt for ex-soldier who fled jail

Shayma Bakht, Tom Witherow
Fiona Hamilton Chief Reporter

A former British Army soldier and suspected terrorist has vanished without trace after escaping from prison and may already be abroad, the police admitted yesterday.

Scotland Yard said there had been no confirmed sightings of Daniel Abed Khalife, 21, who is alleged to have tried to pass information to Iran, since he broke out of HMP Wandsworth on Wednesday by strapping himself to the bottom of a food delivery lorry.

Detectives said it indicated that Khalife, who is accused of breaking the Official Secrets Act and leaving fake bombs at a military base, was a resourceful individual whose training could help him to evade detection.

Last night The Times obtained CCTV footage that showed the Bidfood lorry driving down a residential street 200 yards from the prison. Khalife cannot be seen, indicating that he may have leapt off the vehicle almost immediately or was very well hidden.

Police released the van's 2.7-mile route towards east Putney, in southwest London, after revealing a one-hour gap between Khalife's escape and their interception of the vehicle.

The lorry left Wandsworth, a category B prison, at 7.32am and Khalife was declared missing at 7.50am. The Met was notified 25 minutes later and stopped the lorry at 8.37am.

Dominic Murphy, head of the Metropolitan Police's counterterrorism command, said that search efforts were focused on southwest London, where Khalife grew up, but it was "absolutely possible that he has already left the country". Part of the M20 was closed and upgraded security checks were

Continued on page 4

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VISIT…

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Today's highlights

5.40am **Vanessa Frake**, Wormwood Scrubs ex-security chief
1.45pm **Cardinal Vincent Nichols**, Archbishop of Westminster, reflects on the anniversary of Queen Elizabeth's death
3.20pm The comedian **Bill Bailey**, right, on his new charity campaign
6.30pm The comedian **Rosie Jones**
6.35pm **Lord Hague** and **Baroness Bakewell**
7.05pm The Tory MP, net-zero champion and Tudor historian **Chris Skidmore**



TIMES RADIO
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TODAY'S EDITION

Captain Tom salary row
Captain Sir Tom Moore's daughter, Hannah Ingram-Moore, was paid a £70,000 salary and expenses as donations to the charity she set up in her father's name more than halved amid a Charity Commission investigation. **Page 7**

Sunak will press India on Russia
India has a responsibility to "call out" President Putin's invasion of Ukraine and end its neutral position, Rishi Sunak is expected to tell Narendra Modi when the pair meet at the G20 summit of world leaders in Delhi this weekend. **Page 8**

Pollution link to smaller babies
Air pollution means that women who live in cities tend to have slightly smaller babies than those based in the countryside, new research suggests. Previous studies have shown that pollutants can impair normal foetal development in the womb. **Page 10**

163 days since Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich was detained in Russia
#FreeEvan



Mexico reforms abortion laws
Campaigners for women's rights in Mexico have been celebrating after its supreme court agreed to decriminalise abortion and it was confirmed that both the leading candidates for next year's presidential election will be female. **Page 26**

Musk halted Ukraine help
Elon Musk told his engineers to switch off a Starlink satellite network near the coast of Crimea last year due to fears a Ukrainian attack on Russia's naval fleet could trigger a nuclear response, a new biography has revealed. **Page 26**

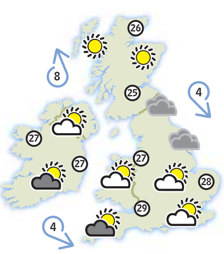
House prices drop by 4.6%
House prices are falling at their fastest rate since the financial crisis and have hit their lowest level in real terms since 2016 as high interest rates subdue the market. Prices dropped 4.6 per cent in the year to September, according to Halifax. **Page 31**

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THE WEATHER



Dry and hot with hazy sunshine in most places, patchy fog near some coasts. **Full forecast, page 54**

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YouTube 'blue tick' to support doctors and stymie antivaxers

Chris Smyth Whitehall Editor

YouTube is promising to downgrade antivaxers and other medical misinformation by promoting "blue tick" health advice under a deal with senior doctors to fight online quackery.

Doctors and charities will be able to apply for accreditation that will put them at the top of YouTube's search results for a host of medical conditions, as part of efforts to make dangerous or misleading advice less visible.

Those who use the status to spread misleading information have been threatened with action by regulators after senior doctors drew up standards for the profession to follow online.

Social media companies have long faced accusations of becoming a haven for anti-vaccination conspiracy theories and dubious health claims.

While companies such as YouTube insist that they already ban "blatant misinformation", misleading claims on issues such as the risk of vaccines remains prominent.

The Academy of Medical Royal Colleges, the umbrella standards group for Britain's doctors, has now drawn up principles which doctors and medical bodies are expected to follow on social media. These include basing claims on evidence, being transparent on how their conclusions are reached and declaring conflicts of interest.

YouTube, which is owned by Google, is now using these standards to allow individual doctors and medical bodies to apply for blue tick-style certification. Doctors and nurses have their professional registration checked and are screened for previous accusations of misinformation. In return, their videos will appear at the top of search results for health conditions.

"There's no point trying to tackle misinformation without high-quality information to push up," said Vishaal Virani, the head of UK health at YouTube. All videos uploaded are scanned for red flags but Virani said that "blatant misinformation is actually quite straightforward" to deal with.

He acknowledged that it was a "challenge" to ensure information is robust "without being accused of restricting freedom of speech".

Alastair Henderson, who drew up the standards for the academy, said that they "should help social media platforms quickly and easily assess which content providers should be promoted and which should be suppressed".

He said: "With so many people turning to online sources for health advice, it's important the information they get is accurate, and evidence-based. This is especially the case since Covid."

Simi Adedeji, a London GP, whose YouTube channel on women's health and skin complaints has almost two million subscribers, is among the first to have been accredited. "It's really about maintaining the standards that you'd expect from a doctor," she said. "Being able to see a badge saying you're a licensed medical professional is really helpful, it adds that additional level of reliability and trust."

Adedeji argued that online health advice allowed people to look up problems they might feel were too embarrassing to ask about elsewhere.

Triple lock could cost up to £45bn a year more by 2050

Oliver Wright Policy Editor

Rises in the state pension will cost taxpayers up to £45 billion a year by 2050, a leading economic think tank has warned, adding pressure on ministers to increase the official retirement age.

The Treasury is preparing to increase pensions by more than 8 per cent next year after a 10.1 per cent rise this year because of the so-called "triple lock" pledge.

This guarantees that pensions rise each year by average earnings, inflation or 2.5 per cent — whichever is higher.

This year's pension rise was based on high inflation — but next year's rise will be based on earnings because these are now expected to outstrip the current 6.8 per cent inflation rate.

New research by the Institute for Fiscal Studies found that since it was introduced in 2011 the triple lock had increased pensions by 60 per cent — 20 per cent more than if pensions had increased by average earnings over the period. If pensions had only been linked to inflation, they would have risen by 42 per cent.

The think tank said this had resulted in the current £203.85 weekly pension payment being £24 more than it would have been if the triple lock did not exist. It warned that such rises could become unsustainable in the longer term and force the government to increase the state pension age to control spending.

The findings come before new figures from the Office for National Statistics of earnings growth for the three months to July 2023.

This is likely to show earnings outstripping inflation for the first time since 2020 and will therefore be used to determine next April's rise in payments for the UK's 12 million pensioners.

The report said data covering April to June 2023 showed annual earnings growth of 8.2 per cent.

The IFS said that while the triple lock had been successful in restoring the value of pensions to about 25 per cent of average full-time earnings — a figure last reached in 1980 — it posed significant problems for the government. Its analysis found that the triple lock could potentially increase spending by anywhere between £5 billion and £45 billion a year, in today's terms, by 2050. Heidi Karjalainen, a research economist at the IFS, said the triple lock also made it "especially hard" for workers to predict how much they might receive from a state pension.

Pincher piles by-election woe on Sunak

Steven Swinford Political Editor

Rishi Sunak is facing another by-election after a former minister accused of groping two men announced his resignation.

Chris Pincher, the MP for Tamworth, quit after losing an appeal against his suspension from the Commons. He was facing a recall petition that could have led to a by-election anyway.

Sunak faces two by-elections next month after Nadine Dorries, MP for Mid Bedfordshire, stood down. The Tories, who lost two out of three by-elections in July, have a 19,634 majority in Tamworth but the seat is still at risk.

Pincher said: "I have said already that I will not stand at the next general election. I do not want my constituents to be put to further uncertainty and so, in consequence, I have made arrangements to resign."

Eddie Hughes, Conservative MP for Walsall North, had been ready to stand at the general election because his seat will be lost to boundary changes but he has now confirmed he will not do so, raising the possibility that a "caretaker" candidate could be appointed.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1
Police investigate baby deaths

the chief constable, Kate Meynell, for her decision. There will be a wealth of information from victim families for her team to use. A large number of us have alleged crimes and we will be sharing our evidence with the police to assist them with their investigations. There has been poor maternity care as well as poor investigation of that care at Nottingham University Hospitals Trust (NUHT) over many years.

"We anticipate that we will be meeting with the chief constable soon to understand what the police investigation will mean for each and every one of us. We hope and believe it will encompass not just the care of individuals who have dead and seriously harmed babies and mothers, but also what families allege is a far-reaching cover-up by NUHT and NHS staff."

NHS England ordered a review of the maternity units at the trust last year. The review began in September 2022 and is being led by Ockenden, who investigated the scandal at Shrewsbury and Telford NHS Trust.

Ockenden met Nottinghamshire police on Wednesday to discuss the initial findings of her review, which will run concurrently with the police investigation. Her team is expected to pass on the details of hundreds of cases involving baby deaths and life-changing harm.

Ockenden has previously said that mothers and babies suffered "often avoidable, life-changing harm" while in the care of the trust, which was "made worse by having to fight to be heard".

She welcomed news of the police investigation yesterday and said that she was "absolutely committed" to working with the local force.

Meynell said: "We want to work alongside the review but also ensure that we do not hinder its progress … Now we have met with Donna Ockenden we plan to hold preliminary discussions with some local families."

Anthony May, chief executive of the trust, inherited the scandal when he took office last September. The police said he was "committed to fully co-operate" with the investigation.

The review will focus on the maternity units at the Queen's Medical Centre and the City Hospital, both run by Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust. The trust previously accepted that its maternity services were unsafe and paid almost £90 million in compensation for claims relating to deaths, stillbirths and brain-damaged babies.

Reports, page 6

Hampstead grief over 'Malibu mansion'

British acting royalty are fighting plans for a home they say is more to US tastes, writes **Constance Kampfner**



Plans for a four-bedroom house in West Hampstead have attracted the opposition of Imelda Staunton, Dame Emma Thompson and Jim Carter



It is an ensemble cast more likely to be seen on the West End stage than a local government website.

But Dame Emma Thompson, Jim Broadbent, Imelda Staunton and Jim Carter have been flexing their muscles in an all-star campaign against a housing proposal in north London that they say would "fit in perfectly — in Malibu".

A couple working in cryptocurrency and AI have requested permission to build a four-bedroom home in West Hampstead that the actors say would clash with the area's Arts and Crafts-style architecture.

Daniel and Sendi Young want to demolish a one-storey 1960s home next to Hampstead Cricket Club's ground and replace it with a modern, aluminium-clad design. Mrs Young, 39, is the Europe managing director of Ripple, a US crypto-cross-border payments company. According to his CV, her 45-year-old husband is a consulting director at Future WorkForce, a professional services company that specialises in automation and AI. Their two-storey home would include a sun terrace, an open-plan kitchen, living and dining area, a green-roof system and ground-source heat pumps.

Greg Wise, Thompson's husband, was one of several local actors to write a letter of objection to Camden council's planning committee, the Camden New Journal reported. Thompson also signed the letter. The couple live near the proposed development.

"I have no inherent issues with modern design, but, like planting trees: the right design in the right place. This is the wrong design in the wrong place," wrote Wise, 57, a trained architect. "It would fit in perfectly in Malibu, but not in our conservation area."

Thompson, 64, recently revealed that she had bought a house in Venice. She said she hoped to live there for several months a year before fulfilling her childhood dream and relocating there permanently.

Staunton, 67, and her husband Carter, 75, who have lived in the area for 30 years, also wrote to object. "The view from the cricket pitch will be a large, looming three-storey aluminium and glass industrial shed, which is totally out of keeping," they said. They added that their chief passion was their garden, which they feared would be overshadowed.

"We garden organically and sustainably with wildlife at the front of our minds in terms of planting and provision of habitat," they wrote. "The proposed building represents a serious threat to our ability to enjoy our garden and a serious threat to the plants and creatures who share it with us."

Broadbent, 74, said that granting permission to the development would "set a dangerous precedent for future applications which would radically alter the unique character of the area".

The actor Richard Clifford, who lives with his partner Sir Derek Jacobi, described the planned house as oppressive and said it "would [be] more appropriate in a very modern industrial estate".

Safeguarding concerns have been raised over whether it would overlook the cricket pitch, which is used by the independent South Hampstead School.

Savills, the agent for the application, said it had tweaked designs after a consultation meeting in March, which had been a more star-studded event than usual. Scenario Architecture, the company behind the design, described it as a contemporary yet sustainable family home and said it would not be visible from the conservation area.

"Conscious of the Arts and Crafts-style, which is a prominent feature of the local area, the new dwelling does not try and compete with this but rather offers a modern building that is lightweight yet durable, and clearly of its time," they said, adding that seeking to copy or pastiche the Arts and Craft buildings would be a wrong approach.

A spokeswoman for the company said it would be "disappointed if the celebrity angle were to have any influence on the council's decision".

She added: "A high level of objections to a contemporary design in a highly urban setting in London is very common and not surprising. We always design respectful to the neighbours, but ultimately the driver is planning policy, not personal subjective opinion."

The Youngs were contacted for comment.

The area has a long history of celebrity neighbours banding together against developments. Last year Carter and Staunton objected to plans for a padel tennis court at the high school near their home, describing it as an "aggressive" sport.

Thompson has previously opposed a new Tesco in nearby Belsize Park. The six-month campaign with Dame Janet Suzman, James Corden, Damian Lewis, Sir Mark Rylance and Tom Conti led to the supermarket backing down.

Last year she opposed proposals to build a car park and lavatory block on fields in Stevenage that inspired *Howards End* by EM Forster. Thompson starred in the 1992 film adaptation.

From 1980 to 1992 several high-profile figures fought against McDonald's opening a branch on Hampstead High Street. It has since closed.



News Jail escape

Prisoner joked about fleeing in

Matt Dathan Home Affairs Editor
Fiona Hamilton Chief Reporter
Tom Ball

The justice secretary has launched an independent investigation into how Daniel Khalife escaped from Wandsworth jail as a former inmate said staff were so stretched they asked him to help count prisoners on his wing.

Alex Chalk vowed the inquiry would leave "no stone unturned" and ordered a separate internal inquiry to hand him the details, by last night, of all those on duty in the kitchens and the security gate at the time of Khalife's escape.

A third inquiry will look into why Khalife, a former soldier accused of trying to spy for Iran, was held in a category-B prison rather than the highest category, A. He was placed in HMP Wandsworth despite having undergone an evaluation to assess the risk he might escape and the threat to the public if he succeeded.

Chalk was unable to tell MPs in a Commons statement yesterday why Khalife was allowed to work in the kitchen, a role usually reserved for inmates who have earned a certain level of trust from staff.

Initial findings of the internal Prison Service investigation suggest Khalife made a strap from material in the prison, perhaps from the plastic cover of a mattress. Police believe he tied himself to the underside of a Bidfood delivery van, that left the jail at 7.30am.

Chris Jones, 53, a former inmate who worked with Khalife in the kitchen, said they used to joke about jumping in the van and driving off.

He told the BBC: "There was a lot of security staff around the kitchens so it is a surprise he got through there. A prison staff member would stand by the lorry ticking off the goods as they were unloaded. You could not move around freely. If you wanted to move from the coffee shop to the kitchen, the staff would log a move. Having said this, many mistakes were made all the time, all down to staffing issues."

Chalk said all security posts were staffed when the van left the estate but Prison Service sources said those on duty were not fully qualified officers.

Steve Gillan, general secretary of the Prison Officers Association, said the service had been "vandalised" by budget cuts. Gillan told Sky News that he had "absolute confidence" in young members, despite suggestions junior staff were on the gates when Khalife escaped. "I'm afraid they haven't been nurtured along because [the government] got rid of all the experienced staff way back," he added.

Gillan said prison staff were not getting the resources to do their jobs. "I've got nothing but praise for young officers coming into a broken system," he said. "The whole criminal justice system is pretty much in meltdown."

A former soldier who has also served time in HMP Wandsworth said the security was "the worst". He said he saw vans not being checked as they left.

"Most of prison category B is very slack," he said. He claimed the searches under prison vans and delivery trucks were cursory and speculated that if Khalife were a trusted prisoner, he could have helped load the van.

Roger Hallam, 57, who co-founded Extinction Rebellion and is one of the leaders of Just Stop Oil, was on remand at HMP Wandsworth last year for three months, charged with conspiracy to commit a public nuisance. He said the lack of staff at the prison was "overwhelmingly in your face at all times".

Chris Atkins, an author who served time in Wandsworth in 2016 for fraud, said staff were so inexperienced they asked him to help. He told the BBC: "At one stage … I was given the register. They were so short-staffed they asked me to tick people off as they left the wing. It's dysfunction on an epic scale."

Chalk has also ordered a review of the categorisation of all 1,600 prisoners at HMP Wandsworth to ensure it has sufficient security to detain them.

A separate review will examine the categorisation of more than 200 terrorism prisoners in England and Wales to minimise the risk of another escape.





Daniel Khalife left HMP Wandsworth under this food lorry, seen at the top of CCTV footage, left, suggesting he may have leapt off after just 200 yards

Cells will be full in weeks

Matt Dathan

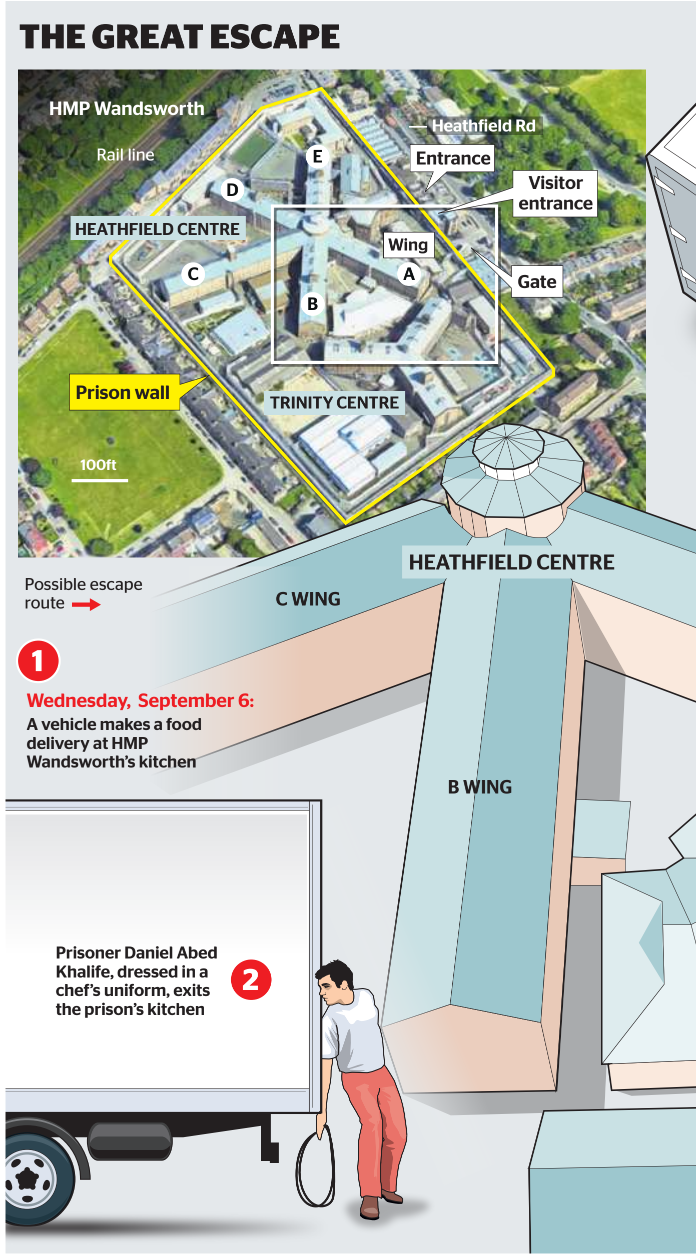
Two thirds of prisons are overcrowded, and at Wandsworth 80 per cent of cells have too many inmates. Charlie Taylor, the chief inspector of prisons, said that many prisoners share a small cell designed for one.

He says that England and Wales will run out of prison space within the next three years, but official projections say this could happen as soon as December.

Emergency measures such as installing portable buildings have delayed maintenance and repair of disused cells. Many cells have insufficient ventilation or broken windows that leave prisoners cold in winter and too hot in summer.

Staff levels are approaching dangerously low levels, according to a Ministry of Justice document published last month. It said that 15 per cent of prisons are expected to have fewer than 80 per cent of the staff they need.

While prison officers used to be recruited from the armed forces, they are now younger and often recruited straight out of school. This has led to inexperienced officers guarding prisons, and exploitation by inmates.



Inmates' most audacious bids for freedom

Peter Chappell

The escape from Wandsworth prison by Daniel Khalife, who is thought to have evaded security by clinging to the bottom of a van leaving the jail, has echoes of some of the most audacious prison breaks in British history.

JOHN STRAFFEN
Straffen, a convicted double murderer, managed to escape from Broadmoor psychiatric hospital in 1952 by clambering on to a shed roof and scaling the perimeter wall. He killed Linda Bowyer, five, almost immediately. He spent less than a day on the run and was arrested and sentenced to death, later reduced to life imprisonment because he was deemed eligible for psychiatric treatment. He had originally been held over the killings of two young children.

RONNIE BIGGS
Biggs was arrested in 1963 over his involvement in what became known as the Great Train Robbery, when £2.6 million was stolen from a mail train. Police discovered the robbers' hideout, a farm in Buckinghamshire, after a tip-off from a local farmer. Biggs escaped from Wandsworth 15 months into his sentence by using a rope ladder to scale a wall and jumping on to the top of a delivery van. He lived for 30 years in Australia and Brazil, before returning to the UK in 2001, because, according to his son, he wanted to "walk into a Margate pub as an Englishman and buy a pint of bitter".

GEORGE BLAKE
Blake was arrested in 1961 and confessed to being a Soviet double agent who had passed secrets to Moscow. He was jailed for 42 years but escaped from Wormwood Scrubs prison, in west London, in 1966 with two other men, using a rope ladder whose rungs were made out of knitting needles. He fled to the Soviet Union, where he died in 2020 at the age of 98.

JOHN MASSEY
Massey escaped from Pentonville in 2012 after hiding in the prison gym and scaling the wall using a rope fashioned from netting. He had been in jail for 37 years after shooting dead a doorman at an east London pub. He was captured by police after two days. He was released in 2018 and this year published a book about his experiences, *Locks, Bolts and Bars: A Life Inside* this year.

JAMES WHITLOCK AND MATTHEW BAKER
Baker, who was awaiting sentencing for murder, and Whitlock, on remand charged with conspiracy to burgle, escaped from Pentonville prison, in north London, in 2016 by sawing through a metal bar, clambering over the roof and swinging around a CCTV pole using a bedsheet. They used stuffed pillows to fool guards into thinking they were in bed. Despite dying his hair, Baker was arrested in east London after two days and Whitlock four days later.

CCTV clue in hunt for 'ingenious' former soldier

Continued from page 1
continuing at the Port of Dover in Kent.

Recriminations grew over what Alex Chalk, the justice secretary, said was a grave security breach. He said there would be an independent review of the breakout, and the security level of all UK terrorist prisoners, and all inmates at Wandsworth, would be examined.

Neil Basu, the Met's former head of counterterrorism, questioned why Khalife was not in a category A prison.

One former prisoner said that staffing levels at Wandsworth were so poor that he had taken roll call, and others said delivery vans and other vehicles were not checked properly. Charlie Taylor, the chief inspector of prisons, who has described Wandsworth as "crumbling, overcrowded, vermin-infested", said it should be shut down.

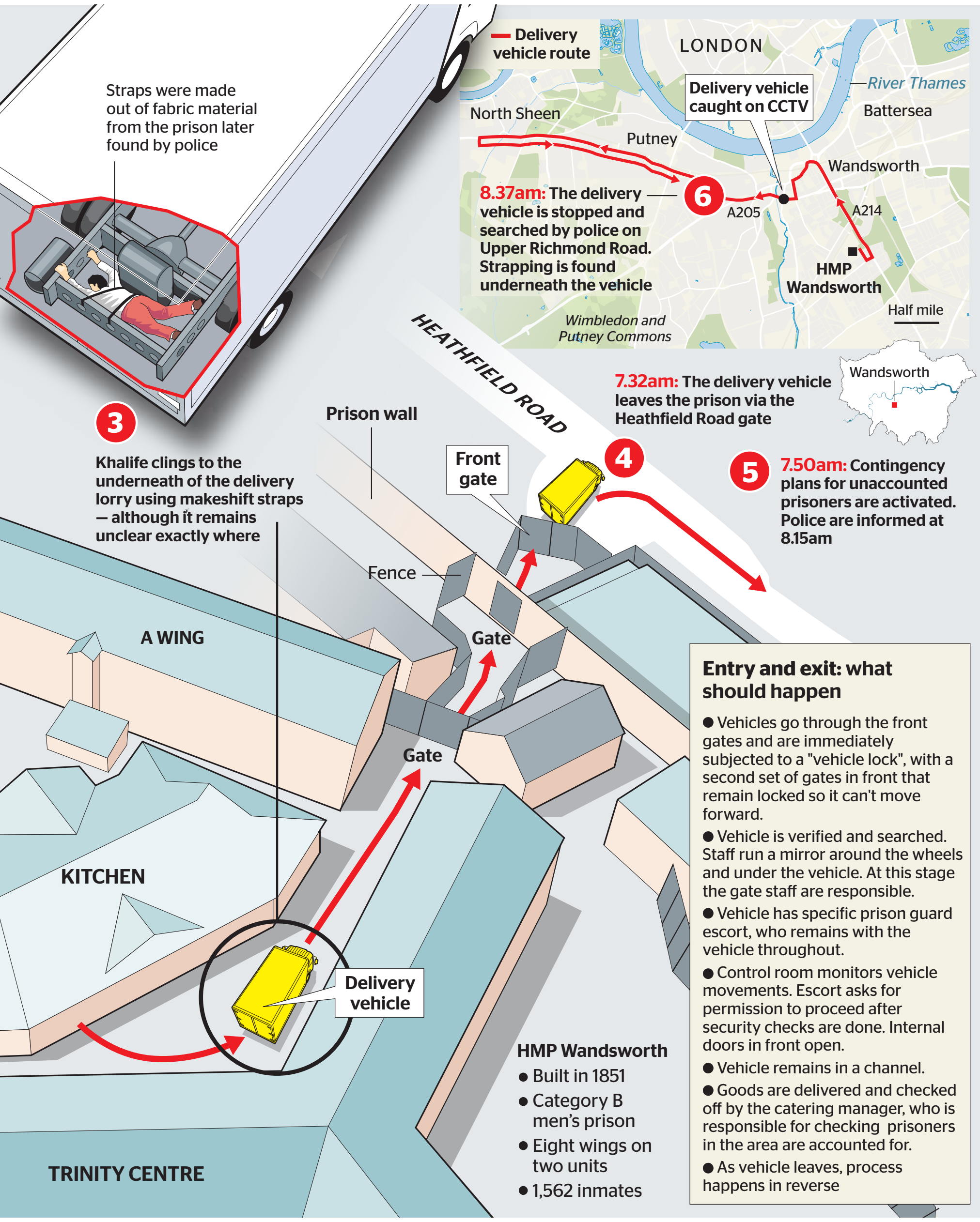
Murphy said that Khalife, who may have fashioned straps out of the plastic covering on his cell mattress, must have planned his escape: "It's not something you can do at really short notice."

Police are checking CCTV footage to see if Khalife got into a car or vanished into parkland. Murphy did not rule out him having accomplices. There had been more than 50 phone calls from the public but no confirmed sightings, "perhaps testament to [his] ingenuity". He added: "We have some of the best military in the world here in the UK and he was a trained soldier. Ultimately he has skills perhaps that some sections of the public don't have."

Murphy said Khalife was still thought to pose a low risk to the public but urged anyone who saw him to call 999 and not make an approach. The Bidfood driver had been unaware of the escape, he added.

Breakout signals serious problems with Britain's jails, leading article, page 25

van with jail kitchen colleague



Class clown dreamt of being a cyberwarrior

**Fiona Hamilton, Shayma Bakht
Duncan Gardham, Tom Witherow**

The suspected terrorist accused of trying to pass information to Iran left school at 16 before joining an army regiment involved in intercepting enemy intelligence.

Daniel Abed Khalife, 21, who was brought up with his twin sister by their mother, had been serving with the Royal Corps of Signals, which the MoD describes as a leader in IT, cyber and telecommunications that provides "battle-winning communications to every part of the army".

It will not say exactly where Khalife was stationed at the Beacon Barracks base. Units there include the 1st Signal Brigade, which is involved in providing army communications, including for sensitive operations overseas, and intercepting enemy signals.

Khalife joined the army intending to become involved in cyberwarfare to help Britain, according to friends. He dropped out of school aged 16 and joined the army in 2018. His LinkedIn profile described him as a network engineer and computer specialist.

His family originally lived in central London but from the age of ten he was brought up in a small flat in Kingston, close to Richmond Park in southwest London. He is believed to have been estranged from his father for several years since his parents separated.

Neighbours said that Khalife's mother has since moved to Wales.

The twins attended Teddington School, whose former pupils include the actress Keira Knightley.

A friend said: "He was a very nice guy when he joined the school aged 11. He was the class clown, one of the funniest in the year, but he became a bit more into his shell."

He was in the lower sets at school, and was described as a bit of a loner who sat at the back "swinging on his chair". He passed a handful of GCSEs and then joined the army, being stationed at Beacon Barracks in Staffordshire. One of the photos that emerged yesterday was taken at Pirbright Camp in Surrey,


Daniel Abed Khalife in army training

where he was in training in 2019. Another was taken at Blandford Camp in Dorset.

Khalife was accused of planting fake bombs at the Stafford base in January and disappeared for three weeks before he was arrested and charged with a terrorism offence. He was later also charged under the Official Secrets Act with collecting information that could be useful to an enemy. He is accused of using the MoD's Joint Personnel Administration system to collect personal information about soldiers.

The Metropolitan Police are focusing searches for Khalife on the almost three miles driven by the Bidfood delivery lorry he strapped himself underneath. Former prisoners said he might have made the straps using the plastic mattress covering on the bed in his cell.

Chris Jones, 53, who was released from Wandsworth in June, told the BBC that they had worked in the kitchen together and that Khalife had told him he was "going to be famous".

Commander Dominic Murphy, head of the Met's anti-terrorism command, said that Khalife was a very "resourceful individual" who might be able to evade capture.

That canteen job was his golden ticket — so who handed it to him?

Ian Acheson
Comment

Alex Chalk, the justice secretary, has done the right thing, in principle anyway, by ordering an independent investigation into the latest blunders to expose huge problems in our prison system. Much will depend on the credentials of the person and their terms of reference when they look into the escape of a terrorist suspect from Wandsworth prison. I have no confidence in His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service to mark its own homework. Nor should this work be outsourced to one of the many people who have shuttled between cosy careers in prison senior management and the prison reform sector.

It came as no surprise that Daniel Abel Khalife was apparently able to smuggle himself out of the huge and decrepit Victorian jail in south London by hiding underneath a vehicle — I'm only surprised it hadn't happened sooner.

Inspectors visited Wandsworth last year and reported a filthy prison with decaying infrastructure, crawling with vermin, with insufficient staff to run even a basic regime. Self-reported morale among its frontline staff was one of the worst results I've seen, with a majority saying it was poor or very poor. Between 30 per cent and 44 per cent of operational prison officers — responsible for security, safety and rehabilitation — were not deployable on a daily basis.

The chief inspector, Charlie Taylor, implored Prison Service chiefs to act. Not for the first time. And not for the first time, he was ignored. Meanwhile, at Prison Service headquarters more than 5,000 non-operational bureaucrats represent the only growth area in the prison-people business.

It seems almost inconceivable that this sclerotic organisation, bursting with senior managers, had to rely on an unannounced inspection to reveal to ministers how bad things were. But nothing was done about Taylor's recommendations because they carry no legal force and are projected into a void of accountability.

Any of us who have worked in successful prisons know that frontline workers with low morale, who do not believe they are valued in terms of their safety, welfare or reward, will not perform at their best. This might go some way to explain just how many human and procedural security protections had to be breached to allow Khalife to gain his freedom. When heads are down, crucial things get missed.

But what on earth was he doing at Wandsworth in the first place? The more we know about this suspect — charged under terrorism legislation, remanded in custody because of fears he was a flight risk — the more bizarre the decision appears to send him to a prison in freefall and give him a job in the prison kitchen. This is where an investigation must start. Kitchen jobs are prized in local prisons, pay relatively well and are normally subject to strict risk assessments, as you'd expect if you put a load of felons in charge of some very big knives. When I was head of security at Wandsworth in the mid-1990s, intelligence-led risk assessments of those who wanted to work in vulnerable areas was our bread and butter. However, that was when the prison was properly resourced and sufficient numbers of prison officers were clearly and confidently in charge.

All lines of inquiry must be pursued, including testing the hypothesis that Khalife was assisted by others — potentially prison staff. Corruption flourishes in jails where your heart is in your boots.

But it is sadly all too possible that the general dereliction of this prison, mired in squalor, holding far more people than even the Victorians intended, allowed this lapse to occur.

Seven years ago I recommended that the secretary of state for justice have his own independent adviser on anti-terrorism in prisons. I made that recommendation — never enacted — precisely because I saw that the Prison Service was unable and unwilling to confront, correct and even communicate to its political bosses the deficiencies in its management of violent extremism. I fear Chalk is finding out the hard way that this legacy continues.

Professor Ian Acheson is a former prison governor and head of security at HMP Wandsworth

News

‘How can there be so many deaths of babies and nobody held accountable?’

Tom Ball, Eleanor Hayward

Harriet Hawkins died avoidably before she was born in April 2016. Her mother had spent six days in labour but was repeatedly turned away by midwives and doctors after going back and forth to Nottingham City Hospital. By the time she was admitted her baby was dead.

Harriet's parents, Dr Jack Hawkins and his wife, Sarah, a physiotherapist, both worked at the hospital trust at the time. They had to fight to get hospital bosses to admit responsibility, however, meaning that their daughter's body needed to be kept in a mortuary as "evidence" for two years.

As they pursued justice, it became clear the case was not a one off. Dozens more bereaved and traumatised families began to get in touch.

Jack Hawkins welcomed news last night of police involvement. "We are so pleased," he said. "We imagined we would have to fight the police to be heard like we have had to do with every other organisation.

"We have been saying for a very long time that there has needed to be police involvement. We don't want people to be guilty necessarily but we do want it to be investigated — to what extent can there be so many baby deaths in this town and nobody held accountable? It wouldn't be like that if it was an entire playground of children who came to harm and died in a year. It is unimaginable that we have got to this position."



JACOB KING/PA



Dr Jack Hawkins and his wife, Sarah, with their daughter Lottie. They worked for Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust, of which the Queen's Medical Centre is part, when their daughter Harriet died at birth

CARSON ALLEN

Carson died at Nottingham City Hospital in July 2013, three hours after he was delivered. An inquest held the following year found he had received a fatal injury when a scalpel went into his skull during a caesarean section.

Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust maintained at first there were complications that could not have been foreseen. The coroner criticised the trust, however, for a "woefully inadequate" investigation into the circumstances of Carson's death.

Carson was more susceptible to injury because his mother, Claire Smith, had undergone a gynaecological operation, the inquest was told. Doctors were not informed of this before the procedure was carried out.

The trust later accepted that Smith was not properly advised on the risks involved and it paid an undisclosed compensation sum to the family.

"For Carson's life to end in the way it did is unacceptable," Smith, 47, said. "During my C-section, the doctor cut my baby's head so deep that he died. I will never forgive them."

FELICITY BENYON

Benyon, whose bladder was accidentally removed during a C-section in 2015, welcomed the investigation and said she looked forward to meeting the chief constable. The mother of two, 37, from Mansfield, Nottinghamshire, was left with lifelong injuries after she gave birth to her second child at Queen's Medical Centre.

Doctors decided to remove her womb during her C-section owing to concerns that she might have had a potentially fatal complication in which the placenta grows through the uterus. When they removed her womb they also took out her bladder by accident. She has to wear a urostomy bag as a result.

Benyon believes the hospital did not have the right specialists on hand and that others should have been on standby, given that they suspected she had a complication. In 2020 she reached a settlement with the trust, which accepted liability. She said she had "mixed emotions" after the investigation was announced. "I'm happy that it's being looked into," she said. "But there's a feeling of dread. It's prolonging the harm. We've moved another step in the direction. It's taken a long time."

WYNTER ANDREWS

Wynter died 23 minutes after she was delivered by C-section at the Queen's Medical Centre. Sarah Andrews, her mother, had started having contractions six days before being admitted to the maternity ward on September 14, 2019.

Given how long she had been having contractions, she should have been placed on a ward where doctors were present. However, she was admitted to a unit where there were only midwives.

The midwives failed to recognise that she was in established labour, believing her instead to be in the earlier stage of latent labour. Eventually a decision was made to carry out a C-section but by then it was too late to deliver Wynter safely and she died soon afterwards. Nottingham University Hospitals Trust pleaded guilty to two counts relating to failures in both Wynter's and Andrews's care last January, the first time the trust has been criminally prosecuted.

The Care Quality Commission, the regulator that prosecuted the trust, said the hospital had exposed Wynter and her mother to "a significant risk of avoidable harm" by failing to identify and manage risks, despite knowing that Andrews, then aged 33, was deemed as having a high-risk pregnancy for health reasons. Andrews previously said that she and her daughter were failed "in the most cruel way".

Q&A

What has happened at the trust?
Dozens of babies died or were brain damaged at Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust (NUHT) amid allegations of repeated poor care spanning a decade from 2012.

The trust has accepted that its maternity services were unsafe and has already paid almost £90 million in compensation relating to deaths, stillbirths and babies left brain damaged.

In January NUHT pleaded guilty to a series of failings to provide safe care and treatment to Sarah Andrews and her baby Wynter, after a criminal prosecution brought by the Care Quality Commission. Wynter died 23 minutes after she was delivered by caesarean section in 2019.

Last year NHS England commissioned a review into the services by Donna Ockenden, an independent midwife. She had conducted a similar exercise at Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust.

Why are the police getting involved?
Kate Meynell, Nottinghamshire's chief constable, said the decision was taken to prepare the inquiry after a meeting with Ockenden. West Mercia police also began an investigation into maternity services alongside her review into Shrewsbury and Telford. That investigation, Operation Lincoln, is likely to take some time, the force said yesterday. Although the police investigation has yet to begin, families hope it will look at individual deaths and at whether the hospital management's handling of cases amounted to negligence.

How is the hospital rated?
Maternity services at Nottingham City Hospital and Queen's Medical Centre, the trust's two sites, are rated "inadequate" overall. After an inspection in May last year, the Care Quality Commission issued a warning notice about how the hospitals managed observations and the care of women approaching triage services.

What does the hospital say?
Anthony May, the chief executive of NUHT, has "committed to fully co-operate" with the police investigation, the force said.

Behind the story

Despite a series of high-profile inquiries calling for national reform, appalling stories about NHS maternity care continue to emerge with horrifying frequency (Eleanor Hayward writes).

It is increasingly clear that recent NHS maternity scandals, including those at East Kent, Morecambe Bay and Shrewsbury and Telford, were not one-off, isolated tragedies but are indicative of a broken system.

The latest research suggests that NHS maternity services are deteriorating: more than half of units no longer meet basic safety standards, according to the Care Quality Commission. Maternity negligence claims have increased over the past decade and now make up three quarters of all multimillion-pound NHS compensation payouts.

It means that the NHS now spends twice as much compensating mothers as it does on caring for them. The cost of compensating families for clinical negligence in maternity has reached £8.2 billion a year, compared with the £3 billion spent by the NHS annually on maternity and neonatal services.

Poor care is rooted in a shortage of 2,500 midwives, meaning that wards are understaffed and overstretched. A failure to listen to women and take their concerns or pain seriously is also at the heart of many failings in maternity care.

Many of the recent scandals share a common theme: of managers failing to investigate deaths, and silencing whistleblowers and bereaved families.

This has been laid bare most recently by the Lucy Letby case, when NHS managers ignored the concerns of senior doctors who were trying to prevent her killing more babies.

Last year an investigation by Dr Bill Kirkup into "deplorable" maternity care at East Kent Hospitals concluded that 97 babies and mothers had died or were harmed between 2009 and 2020.

The report said managers were presented with "inescapable" evidence that babies were coming to harm but failed to take action, and their behaviour amounted to a "cover-up of the truth".

The families who lost babies in Nottingham allege similar failings by management, which they say has not been held to account, despite local coroners concluding "neglect" in multiple inquests.

Former Met officers admit sharing racist jokes on WhatsApp

Laurence Sleator

Five former Metropolitan Police officers who served in the same unit as Wayne Couzens, the officer that kidnapped and murdered Sarah Everard, have admitted sending grossly offensive racist messages.

The men, all in their sixties, used a WhatsApp group to share racist jokes and memes including messages about the royal family, the Duchess of Sussex and members of the cabinet.

The charges relate to messages shared between September 2020 and September 2022, after their service in the Met had ended.

Appearing at Westminster magistrates' court Robert Lewis, 62, Peter Booth, 66, Anthony Elsom, 67, Alan Hall, 65, and Trevor Lewton, 65, pleaded guilty under the Communications Act 2003 to sending by public communication grossly offensive racist messages. The offence carries a maximum sentence of six months in jail or a fine.

The men were not serving at any point during their participation in the group, the Met said, having retired between 2001 and 2015. Lewis, who retired from the Met in May 2015, was sacked by the Home Office last November from his post with Border Force for gross misconduct.

According to the charges, some of the messages shared in the closed group chat — titled "Old Boys Beer Meet — Wales" — referenced the royal family, including a racially offensive photo of the Prince and Princess of Wales greeting young black children through a wire fence. Another joke was made about Princess Diana, Prince Harry, the Duchess of Sussex and the late Duke of Edinburgh; others about Rishi Sunak and his former cabinet colleagues Priti Patel and Sajid Javid. Offensive comments were made about the floods last year in Pakistan which killed thousands of people. Jokes about Muslims, Romanians and Chinese people were shared.

The five officers served in various parts of the Met, including the parliamentary and diplomatic protection command — a unit described by Baroness Casey of Blackstock in her review of the Met as a "dark corner" of the force. Her report said the unit was "well resourced, with elitist attitudes and toxic cultures of bullying, racism, sexism and ableism, [where] normal rules do not seem to apply".

The WhatsApp group was revealed following an investigation by the BBC's *Newsnight* after a whistleblower came forward. The men were charged in August. A sixth officer, Michael Chadwell, 62, of Hampshire, denies one charge, disputing that the messages were "grossly offensive". He will appear for a trial at City of London magistrates' court on November 6.

The five other former officers will be sentenced after his trial. They were all granted unconditional bail.

Captain Tom's daughter got £70k as charity takings tumbled

Charlie Parker

Captain Sir Tom Moore's daughter was paid a salary and expenses of more than £70,000 as donations to the charity she set up in her father's name more than halved amid a watchdog inquiry.

Accounts for The Captain Tom Foundation, filed on Wednesday, reveal that Hannah Ingram-Moore earned a salary of £63,750 until last year and was also paid travel and administration expenses of £7,602.

At the same time an intervention by the Charity Commission had "a massive adverse impact on the charity", according to the documentation.

The foundation's income for 18 months was less than half the figure for the previous 12 months, dropping from £1 million in the 12 months to the end of May 2021 to £400,000 in the 18 months to November last year.

Ingram-Moore and her husband, Colin, have been criticised over their management of the charity after Captain Tom's death in February 2021.

The Second World War veteran raised £38 million for the NHS at the start of the pandemic in 2020 by walking laps of his garden in Bedfordshire.

The charity watchdog launched a statutory inquiry into the foundation last year over decisions that "may have generated a significant profit" for a company run by the couple.

It had already opened a case into the charity shortly after Moore's death in February 2021, at the age of 100, and began reviewing how the organisation had been set up. According to the latest accounts, payments of just over £24,000 were also made for office rental and telephone costs to Maytrix Group Limited, a company controlled by Ingram-Moore and her husband.

The foundation spent nearly £180,000 on staffing during the period, including wages, social security costs and pensions. This summer, the charity stopped taking money from donors after planning chiefs at Central Bedfordshire Council ordered that an unauthorised spa pool block at Ingram-Moore's home should be demolished — an appeal against the order is set for a hearing next month. Weeks later, Ingram-Moore was accused of being paid, via a family firm, for appearances linked to her late father's charity.

It emerged that in 2021 and last year she was a judge at awards ceremonies that featured The Captain Tom Foundation. According to BBC *Newsnight*, her fee was paid not to the foundation but to Maytrix Group.

The Times reported in July that the foundation had lost the chief executive who was brought in to turn around the charity, which even considered changing its name to distance itself from Moore. Jack Gilbert, a founding member of the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust, left last October.

The latest report states that the Charity Commission investigation led to the decision to axe Gilbert.

It said: "Potential new trustees all withdrew their applications and we have been unable to progress matters on this front. We did take the decision to appoint a new CEO in the hope that regulatory matters could be progressed more quickly and that we could regroup and re-build.

"We gave our CEO time to deliver his strategic plan. Unfortunately regulatory matters could not be progressed as quickly as we all hoped and the trustees took the difficult decision to end the CEO's contract and close all payment channels whilst the statutory inquiry remains open."

In a statement posted yesterday on Twitter/X, Ingram-Moore said she "did not take any payments from the charity's bank account" and has had no involvement with the charity in any capacity since April last year.

She said her husband, while one of the trustees, has "never had any access" to the account, adding: "No charity money was used in the construction of the new building in the grounds of the family home."



Hannah Ingram-Moore was paid £63,750 plus expenses



OLIVIER HOSLET/EPA

Plane critics let fly with custard pies for O'Leary

The outspoken boss of Ryanair was hit in the face with a pair of custard pies hurled by climate protesters in Brussels yesterday morning (Ben Clatworthy writes).

Michael O'Leary was about to speak to press outside the EU's headquarters when he was ambushed by the female eco-activists.

The Irish businessman was in the Belgian capital to deliver a petition to the European Commission urging a law change to protect "overflights" in Europe at times of industrial action.

O'Leary was hit in the face by the first pie and in the back of the head by the second as he ducked to avoid it.

One activist shouted "welcome in Belgium" as the pair ran off. "Stop the pollution of the f*ing planes." O'Leary muttered "Well done" as he cleaned himself up.**

The incident did not deter the airline boss, who told reporters: "I have never had such a warm welcome. Unfortunately it was environmentalists and the cream was artificial. I invite passengers to come to Ireland where the cream is better."

Ryanair's petition calling for the EU to change the law to protect flights has been signed by more than 1.5 million passengers.

O'Leary, 62, addressed the media next to a cardboard cutout of Ursula von der Leyen, the president of the European Commission.

The businessman is furious with Von der Leyen over the perceived lack of action by Brussels technocrats who he claims have refused to change the law to prevent disruption to flights from strikes by air-traffic controllers.

Airlines are particularly angry at the situation in France, which has been blighted by strikes since the turn of the year. Short-haul flights leaving the UK and Spain are badly affected because officials in France use minimum-service legislation to protect domestic departures and long-haul flights "overflying" the country — using French airspace but not landing. The result is mass cancellations of short-haul flights that overfly.

O'Leary is lobbying the EU to separate upper airspace from lower airspace to avoid disruption to planes flying over countries.

He previously told The Times: "It is very difficult to explain to passengers in the UK, Ireland and Spain that their flights are cancelled because of a few air-traffic controllers in France walking out, even though their flight is not landing in France."

Several European states already have protections in place to prevent overflight cancellations and Ryanair wants the protections to be enforced in all EU member states.

● Gatwick has suffered almost a month of air-traffic control disruption this summer, resulting in tens of thousands of passengers having their flights cancelled. Airlines told The Times there have been 29 days of air traffic restrictions at the airport since May. They blame a shortage of staff at Nats, the UK controller. On Wednesday dozens of flights were cancelled because of staff illness.



Michael O'Leary was targeted as he prepared to address the press in Brussels. He muttered "well done" after the attack

Sunak will tell India to denounce Putin's invasion of Ukraine

Harry Yorke

India has a responsibility to "call out" President Putin's invasion of Ukraine, Rishi Sunak is expected to tell Narendra Modi when the pair meet at the G20 summit in Delhi this weekend.

No 10 has signalled that Sunak will "encourage" the Indian prime minister, with whom he is holding talks tomorrow, to end his country's neutrality.

They are also expected to discuss the negotiations about a trade deal, which have reached their final and most politically sensitive stages.

The prime minister's spokesman said that Sunak would call on Modi and other members of his government to use their influence to "bring an end to Putin's brutal invasion". Sunak would also use "any opportunity" at the summit to remind the Kremlin of the "incredible damage their illegal war is causing, both in Ukraine and globally", the spokesman added.

Sergey Lavrov, the Russian foreign minister, is attending in Putin's place.

Sunak will also be calling on other G20 leaders to denounce Putin's decision to pull out of a deal allowing Ukraine to safely export its grain. The Black Sea blockade has exacerbated food shortages in Africa and the Middle East and pushed up global prices.

The UK will host an international food security conference in November, while it will also monitor and expose Russian activity in the Black Sea. RAF planes will fly over the area to deter Russian attacks on civilian vessels.

The G20 summit, which Modi hopes will showcase India's position as a growing economic and diplomatic power, will also be attended by President Biden, President Macron and Olaf Scholz, the German chancellor. It is expected to be dominated by climate change and the Ukraine conflict but has been overshadowed by President Xi's decision to stay away. Li Qiang, the Chinese premier, is expected to attend in Xi's place. Downing Street said no meeting with Sunak had been agreed.

There is concern that divisions within the bloc could prevent any joint communiqué, the leaders' declaration, from being issued. It would be the first to end without one since 2008, representing a diplomatic flop for Modi.

Sunak has described India as an "indispensable" economic and political partner but there is consternation among British and other western politicians over Delhi's refusal to condemn the Russian invasion. India has long maintained a non-aligned foreign policy, while its diplomatic ties with Moscow stretch back to the Soviet era. It has refused to shift its stance despite lobbying from western governments which had hoped Delhi would use its rotating presidency of the G20 to increase the pressure on Putin.

Western nations have imposed sanctions and begun divesting from Russian oil and gas, but India has increased its imports of crude oil. Russia remains India's largest supplier of military and defence equipment.

Sunak's spokesman said: "We will use every opportunity to show our support on Ukraine and further foster global support as well. India clearly has a vital role to play, as the world's largest democracy, in calling out Russia's assault on human rights and, indeed, democracy itself. We will use meetings with Modi or elsewhere to encourage them to use that influence to bring an end to Putin's brutal invasion."

In a statement yesterday the prime minister said: "Once again, Vladimir Putin is failing to show his face at the G20. He is the architect of his own diplomatic exile, isolating himself in his presidential palace and blocking out criticism and reality."

Elsewhere at the summit, Sunak is expected to lead discussions on inflation, immigration and new technologies such as artificial intelligence.

Erratic Xi snubs G20, World, page 27

What's on summit agenda

Russia
Western nations are pushing for a joint communiqué that roundly condemns Russia's invasion. Sergey Lavrov, the foreign minister who is deputising for President Putin, has warned that he will block anything that does not reflect Moscow's position, while France has said it will not sign without a denunciation of Russia. India has avoided taking sides. Consensus is unlikely.

Climate change
India has used its presidency of the G20 to prioritise climate change and green technologies. Narendra Modi is unhappy at the failure of western nations to spend $100 billion a year to help developing countries decarbonise, as they promised. Rishi Sunak is expected to announce new initiatives but the absence of Putin and President Xi will limit progress.

Trade
International debt reform, loans to developing nations and food and energy security will be discussed. Modi will hold talks with the UK, Canada, the EU and Russia, putting the spotlight on the global south. Sunak will bring up inflation and stabilising the global economy. But without Xi, the United States and China cannot discuss trade disputes.

Digital transition
The "one future" theme will cover cryptocurrencies, artificial intelligence (AI) and how the world can regulate them. Sunak's focus will be on the safety of AI with the UK preparing to host a conference about it later this year. Again, Xi's absence is key as China and the US race for dominance in the field.





Colourful characters Sir Keir Starmer visited an AstraZeneca lab in Macclesfield

Delhi standing ground on student stays

Harry Yorke, Oliver Wright

New rights for Indian students and workers in Britain are being demanded by Narendra Modi as part of a free trade deal, ahead of a meeting between him and Rishi Sunak.

Sunak and Modi are expected to discuss sticking points of the agreement in talks held before the G20 summit.

The deal is also expected to give opportunities to UK services companies to operate in India, although disputes remain on issues such as intellectual property and rules of origin.

With 19 of 26 chapters of a trade deal completed, officials on both sides said that only sensitive and politically difficult issues remained. These are expected to be addressed in the bilateral meeting today.

A government source said that some of the talks had been hampered by the inability of Indian negotiators to agree significant trade-offs required to get an agreement over the line. They also said the political will of both prime ministers would be required. "Both Sunak and Modi want to get this done," the source said. "Hopefully their meeting will give renewed impetus to the talks."

Another source suggested that Downing Street and Delhi hoped to organise a second prime ministerial visit to India this autumn to finalise the deal.

Indian sources told The Times that among the immigration changes requested by Delhi was a legal commitment to protect the length of time Indian students are permitted to stay in the UK after they graduate.

At present, they are allowed to stay for two years but this could be changed at any time and Suella Braverman, the home secretary, has pushed for this to be reduced to six months.

Indian officials are also concerned that workers seconded to the UK on business visas have to pay national insurance, despite not being eligible for UK pensions or social security.

As many as 50,000 Indians are granted skilled work visas by the UK annually. India is pushing for a social security agreement similar to deals Britain has signed with Canada, France and Australia. Under such a deal, Indian workers could be exempted from social security contributions providing they continue to make payments to India.

"We would very much like to see that when Indians come and work for three or four years for whichever company, Indian, British or international, their contributions to their pension pots etc are portable in some way back to India. Otherwise they have to leave it behind," Vikram Doraiswami, the Indian high commissioner, told Times Radio.

Speaking yesterday, the prime minister's spokesman did not rule out movement on both issues but insisted that there were "no plans to change our immigration policy to achieve this free-trade agreement".

It follows claims that Braverman warned Sunak on Tuesday against any deal that would increase migration. This was denied by Downing Street sources, who said that Braverman had raised concerns about a small rise in the levels of illegal migration and a rise in the number of people from India who were overstaying their visas.

Tories took £350,000

Geraldine Scott Political Reporter

The Conservative Party has accepted a six-figure donation from a company linked to colourful vapes despite a government crackdown on the products.

The Tories registered a £350,000 donation from Supreme 8 Ltd in May, its third-biggest donation in the second quarter of this year. The company's director is listed as Sandeep Chadha, known as Sandy, who is also the chief executive of Supreme Plc, which has made millions from vapes.

Rishi Sunak has said he fears his two daughters may try vaping because of the brightly coloured packaging and flavours that appear to target children.

Both main political parties are bolstering their war chests and Labour has had its most successful fundraising quarter ever.

Chadha said this year the devices that simulate smoking, such as Elf Bar and Lost Mary vapes, made an "outstanding contribution" to his business.

A report from Supreme, which sells vaping products under its 88Vape brand, said it was the "largest producer of e-liquids by volume in the UK" and produced "an average of over 250,000 bottles of e-liquid per working day".

Amanda Pritchard, chief executive of NHS England, said in June that 40 children were admitted to hospital last year due to "vaping-related disorders", up from 11 two years earlier.

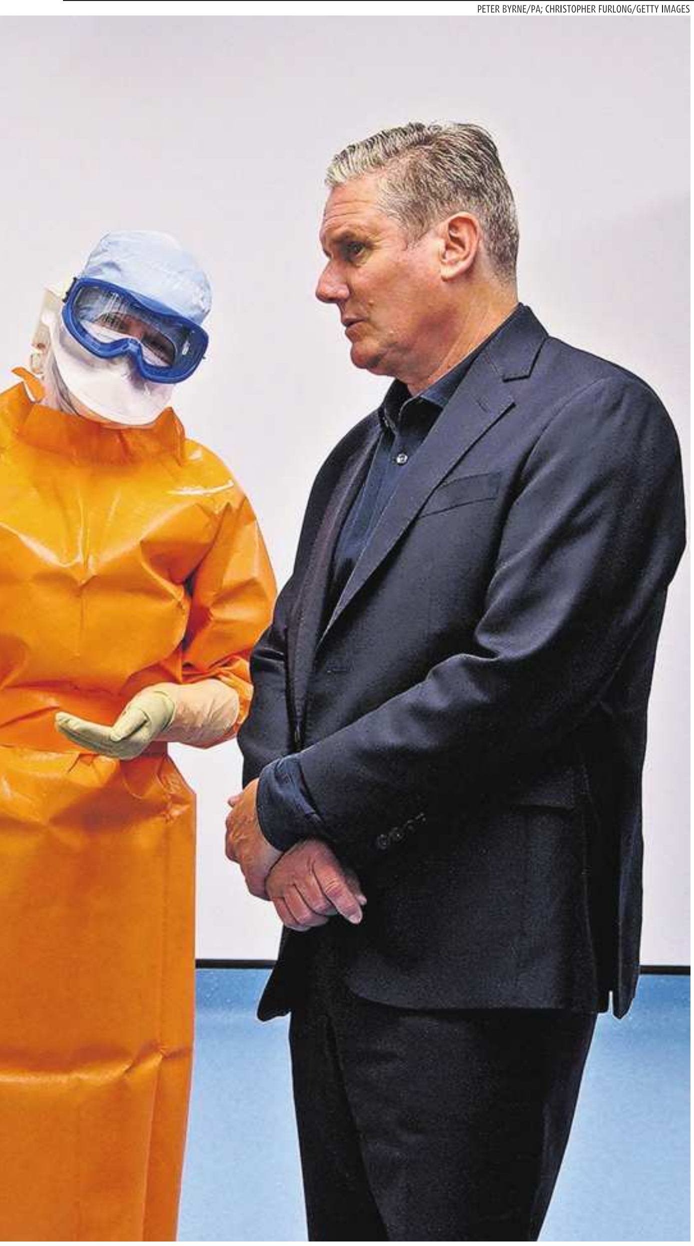
Wes Streeting, the shadow health secretary, said: "We're sleepwalking into a new generation of children getting hooked on nicotine. Yet the Tories put lining their own pockets ahead of protecting children's health. How can Rishi Sunak pretend otherwise when he's taking money from a company selling 'watermelon bubblegum'? Labour will come down like a ton of bricks on those peddling vapes to kids."

Sir Chris Whitty, the chief medical officer for England, wrote in The Times in May that vapes had a role in helping smokers quit but it was "unacceptable" for them to be marketed to children.

The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health has said it is "deeply concerned" about the long-term health impact of e-cigarettes on "young lungs, hearts and brains". It says single-use vapes have a terrible environmental impact, with 1.3 million thrown away each week in the UK.

Dame Rachel de Souza, the children's commissioner for England, has said nicotine-free vapes should be banned

PETER BYRNE/PA; CHRISTOPHER FURLONG/GETTY IMAGES



as Rishi Sunak met students building an electric racing car at Warwick University

gift from vapes boss

for under-18s. Others have claimed that persuading half of England's smokers to switch to vaping would save the NHS £500 million a year.

The Institute of Economic Affairs think tank says Britain has the lightest vaping restrictions in Europe.

The Conservative Party and Chadha have been contacted for comment. Labour and the Conservatives have registered a combined £17.3 million in donations between April and June this year, compared with £6.2 million in the same period last year.



Sandeep Chadha gave to the Tories but Lord Sainsbury preferred Labour

Most went to the Tories, who received £9.8 million against Labour's £7.4 million. In the same period last year Labour had £1.4 million and the Tories £4.7 million. The election next year is expected to be the most costly ever as the government prepares to raise spending limits by up to 80 per cent, which could give parties £15 million more to spend on the campaign.

About half the Tory total came from Frank Hester, the healthcare entrepreneur whose £5 million donation matched that from Mohamed Mansour, the Egyptian-born Tory party treasurer. Hester, boss of the Phoenix Partnership, said Sunak shared his "passion for using technology" to help healthcare staff.



The leading Labour donor was Lord Sainsbury of Turville, the former chairman of the supermarket chain who abandoned the party under Jeremy Corbyn. He gave £3 million in the last quarter, adding to a previous donation of £2 million and two lots of £35,000.

Gary Lubner, the former Autoglass boss, gave £2.2 million. This year he suggested he could hand Labour up to £5 million in the run-up to the election.

PM hails 'bespoke deal' to rejoin EU science scheme

Chris Smyth, Tom Whipple
Holly Nichols

Rishi Sunak has boasted of getting a "bespoke" deal for rejoining the EU science programme as he insisted that co-operation with Brussels has to be on "terms that work for us".

The prime minister defended the delay over returning to the Horizon scheme. He said it was necessary to get good value for taxpayers amid concerns that the EU might penalise Britain.

UK researchers will now be able to apply for grants from the £81 billion fund after negotiators won concessions that included a "clawback mechanism" to ensure Britain will not put in significantly more money than it gets out.

This means that if Britain gets less than 85 per cent in grants from the £2.2 billion a year it is putting into the scheme, the EU will pay a rebate.

Ministers are pleased with securing such a "floor" after previous arrangements imposed a "ceiling" on the amount that would be paid back in grants. Sources for the government also argued that the rebate mechanism would ensure the EU had a "vested interest in UK project leadership" after concerns that British applications might be penalised after Brexit.

Sunak, speaking on a visit to Warwick University, said: "Today is a positive day for the UK science and research community."

Both sides had said that they wanted to expedite the UK's associate membership of Horizon, which, as well as providing centralised funding, helps facilitate co-operation between researchers across the continent. The UK had been one of its leading members.

However, hopes of an early return to the scheme were scuppered when it was tied in with negotiations over the post-Brexit status of Northern Ireland. When, in early spring, these were resolved with the so-called Windsor framework, scientists had hoped Horizon membership would follow soon after.

Many expressed shock that Sunak instead sought to push for further concessions.

Yesterday he defended that decision. "I wanted to take the time to get this right for British taxpayers. We've got a bespoke deal for the UK," he said.

The prime minister described the deal as a "great sign of the relationship" with the EU, which he is seeking to rebuild after years of clashes over Brexit.

Citing deals on illegal immigration, Sunak said that there was now "strong collaboration" in many areas, adding: "I expect that to continue. But it has to be on terms that work for us."

Sunak had previously ordered ministers to draw up a British-only "plan B" and had seriously considered ditching the Horizon scheme, believing it to be bureaucratic, unimaginative and lacking proper links with industry.

News of the deal was welcomed by the UK scientific community. Sir Adrian Smith, president of the Royal Society, said it "allows us to continue to build on decades of collaborative research with our European partners". Beth Thompson, the chief strategy officer at Wellcome, said it was good to see that both sides could work in their own interest. "Reaching this point has required the EU and the UK government to recognise the global benefits that collaboration brings."

Tim Peake, the British astronaut, said that it was good for scientists in the UK and the EU. "It's the largest R&D programme in the world and for our scientists, engineers and technicians to not have access to that programme has put them at a huge disadvantage," he said. "The fact that we are now rejoining that programme is wonderful."

PM should enjoy this eureka moment, leading article, 25

Analysis

There has been more than a modicum of crossness among scientists (Tom Whipple writes). For three years they have heard ministers talk about how the country is a science superpower, how we punch above our weight in science and how science will power the economy.

Science has felt as though Britain views it as the goose that lays the golden eggs. Which is fine: it is. But there has also been a feeling that the one tangible thing the government could do to help science keep squeezing those eggs out was get us in Horizon, and it wasn't doing it.

Horizon is a funding scheme for science. Membership is about far more than money, though — if that were all it was then the government's promise to underwrite any UK applications would have solved the problem.

What Horizon does is to facilitate co-operation. Institutions across the EU can work together, apply for grants together and forge research together.

If you're not in Horizon all that is a lot harder. You can't lead consortiums, you can't be part of the governance of programmes.

Historically, the UK has done very well out of Horizon. The rest of the EU has also done well out of UK membership. In Brexit negotiations that so often felt zero sum, a deal on Horizon was viewed by both as a win-win. For this reason there was an assumption that associate membership would come rapidly when, in 2020, the EU and UK said they wanted it.

But it was held up by Northern Ireland negotiations. When, in February, that impasse was broken, there was again an assumption that Horizon would follow rapidly. It didn't.

The hold-up has been in part about money. After a hiatus, with the latest tranche of funding already started, no one is totally sure how rapidly the UK will get up to speed. It may be that UK researchers instantly start getting funding. It may be that there is a slower acceleration.

This was why, to the UK negotiators, elements of the deal felt unfair. If, as happened in past years, we got far more out of the scheme than we put in (the figure defining this threshold was put at 8 per cent) then as associate members a ratchet would kick in and we would need to up our contribution.

If, though, we got far less, then under the offered deal there was no symmetrical arrangement that would provide a rebate.

Now the deal includes a clawback. For the negotiators, this is a clear win.

And for scientists? There is jubilation. There is extreme relief — in a community that was overwhelmingly anti-Brexit many were resigned to the prospect that we would be going it alone on science. There is also hope: that now we can undo the perceived damage from the uncertainty, from the loss of collaborations and the difficulty recruiting EU researchers.

Some are more pessimistic about this last point than others. Professor Sir John Hardy, group leader at the UK Dementia Research Institute in UCL, said it would take time to recover. "Going back in is good. But irreversible damage has been done," he said.

There is another lesson here: if it is this hard to reach a deal on something that everyone wants, how much more difficult will it be when there is a genuine clash of interests?

Plans for new homes fall short again

Oliver Wright Policy Editor

Latest figures show the number of new homes being granted planning permission continues to fall, suggesting the government is likely to fall well short of its house building targets.

The number of planning applications granted by local authorities fell by 14 per cent in the second quarter of this year, new figures show.

In the year to June, permission was given for 264,000 homes, down 8 per cent from the 286,000 homes granted permission in the previous 12-month period. The government has a target of building 300,000 homes a year but many developments granted planning permission are never completed.

The Home Builders Federation said the figures suggested 44,000 fewer new homes would be built, falling to a level not seen for a decade. The government is still to come forward with proposals to improve the planning system that were promised last year after a rebellion by Tory backbench MPs.

Neil Jefferson, managing director of the federation, accused the government of giving in to nimbyism. "The lack of support for first-time buyers could see housing supply drop markedly in the coming years," he said.

Matthew Pennycook, the shadow housing and planning minister, said: "The devastating impact of Rishi Sunak and Michael Gove's reckless decision to abolish local housing targets continues to be felt, with dire consequences for house building rates across England."

House prices fall, business, page 31
Downward spiral, Bricks&Mortar

News

Women in cities have smaller babies — and air pollution may be to blame

THE TIMES
CLEAN AIR FOR ALL

Eleanor Hayward
Health Correspondent

Air pollution means that women who live in cities tend to give birth to slightly smaller babies than those residing in the countryside, research suggests.

Scientists looked at 4,286 children and their mothers living in five European countries: Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Iceland and Estonia.

They measured average levels of air pollution in the areas in which the women lived while pregnant as well as the "greenness" of their surroundings, including whether they had parks or fields nearby.

A higher level of air pollution was linked with lower birth weights. Women living in areas with a high concentration of tiny pollutants, known as PM2.5 and released by traffic fumes, had babies that were 56g lighter than those in low-pollution areas.

Women surrounded by green spaces had babies with slightly higher birth weights, 27g heavier on average, than mothers living in urban areas.

Previous research has shown that air pollutants can impair normal foetal development, increasing the risk of miscarriage, low birth weight and premature births. Robin Mzati Sinsamala from the University of Bergen in Norway, the lead author of the study, said: "The time when babies are growing in the womb is critical for lung development. We know that babies with a lower birth weight are susceptible to chest infections and that this can lead to problems such as asthma and COPD [chronic obstructive pulmonary disease] later on.

"Our results suggest that pregnant women exposed to air pollution, even at relatively low levels, give birth to smaller babies. Living in a greener area could help counteract this effect. It could be that green areas tend to have lower traffic or that plants help to clear the air of pollution, or green areas may mean it's easier for pregnant women to be physically active."

PM2.5 is formed of airborne particles with a diameter less than 2.5 micrometres, or about a twentieth of the width of a human hair. Their main source is traffic fumes, although they are also released by building and industrial work.

Professor Arzu Yorgancioglu from the European Respiratory Society said: "Women who are pregnant will want to protect their babies from potential harm. However, as individuals it can be difficult to reduce our exposure to air pollution or make our neighbourhoods greener.

"As doctors and researchers who care about children's health, we need to put pressure on governments and policymakers to lower the levels of pollution in the air we breathe. This study also suggests that we could help to mitigate some of the effects of pollution by making our neighbourhoods greener."

The Clean Air for All campaign, launched by The Times in 2019, is calling for tighter pollution limits in the UK based on World Health Organisation guidelines. Health officials say 29,000 to 43,000 people a year are dying in the UK because of air pollution.



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Data privacy warning over fertility apps

Mark Sellman
Technology Correspondent

Technology companies that develop period and fertility-tracking apps have been warned by the regulator to stick to data privacy rules after women complained of being bombarded with baby-related adverts after using the apps.

The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), which has begun a review, said a third of women have used such apps and more than half of them had noticed an increase in baby or fertility-related adverts after signing up, with 17 per cent saying they had found the rise distressing.

A recent report found that eight out of ten of the most popular apps designed to track periods shared personal data with third parties.

The Organisation for the Review of Care and Health Apps (Orcha), an independent company that assesses health apps for the NHS, found that of those that shared data, nearly 70 per cent did so for "marketing purposes".

Emily Keaney, the ICO's deputy commissioner of regulatory policy, said: "These statistics suggest data security is a significant concern for women when it comes to choosing an app to track their periods or [to] plan or prevent pregnancy."

Quintagram® No 1728

Solve all five concise clues using each letter underneath once only

1 Additional (5)

_ _ _ _ _

2 Hold-up in proceedings (5)

_ _ _ _ _

3 Prestige, esteem (6)

_ _ _ _ _ _

4 England-Wales border town (8)

_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

5 Duration (4,4)

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A	A	A	D	E	E	E	H
H	I	L	M	M	M	N	N
N	O	O	O	O	P	R	R
S	T	T	T	U	U	X	Y

Solutions see T2 MindGames p15
Cryptic clues T2 MindGames p14

Border Force on edge

Widespread dissatisfaction about pay, conditions and "confused" leadership could lead to corruption among Border Force officers, warned David Neal, the chief inspector of borders and immigration. He also found that the vetting process for new staff was too weak — given that in their role they would learn how and where to smuggle people and goods in and out of the UK. The Home Office said there was "more to do" but insisted the force could spot insider threats.

Pub attack arrest

A man has been arrested over a homophobic attack outside a pub in Clapham, south London. Two men in their twenties and thirties were standing outside the pub when a man with a knife attacked them at about 10.15pm on August 13. Police said a man aged 19 had been arrested in South Norwood, southeast London, on suspicion of causing grievous bodily harm.

Ticket scams double

The bank Santander says that the number of its customers tricked into buying fake tickets for flights, football matches and concerts has more than doubled in a year. The average loss is £107, it says, and it advises people to protect themselves by paying with a credit card, avoiding offers that look too good to be true and buying only from official sellers.

PC faces rape charges

A Metropolitan Police officer appeared at Westminster magistrates' court yesterday on six charges of rape, one of making threats to kill and one of breaching a non-molestation order. Cliff Mitchell, 23, from Putney, southwest London, has been suspended. He was remanded in custody to appear at Croydon crown court in October.

Jazz group's big win

Ezra Collective, a London-based jazz quintet who met at a youth club, have won the £25,000 Mercury Prize. They beat Arctic Monkeys, Raye and Fred Again with their album *Where I'm Meant To Be*. Their blend of jazz, funk and Afrobeats, performed at the ceremony at the Eventim Apollo in Hammersmith, west London, was praised for its joyous appeal.

Record-breaking September scorcher could reach 33C tomorrow

Poppy Koronka

Britain is having a summer at last, with yesterday provisionally being deemed the hottest day of the year after 32.6C was recorded in Surrey, the Met Office has said.

The heatwave has broken the record for the most consecutive days with a temperature above 30C in September, according to the forecaster. Yesterday was the fourth day above 30C, beating a record broken on four previous occasions, most recently in 2016.

The Met Office said in a post on Twitter/X: "After getting very close yesterday, today [Thursday] is provisionally the hottest day of the year so far, with 32.6C recorded in Wisley."

The soaring temperatures will continue through the weekend and could peak at 33C tomorrow, which is likely to be the hottest day of the year. The UK Health Security Agency has issued an amber warning until Sunday evening, and advised that older people and those with respiratory or cardiovascular diseases are in greater danger from the heat.

Stephen Dixon, of the Met Office, said that temperatures above 30C in September are uncommon but not unheard of — the month's highest daily temperature reading was 35.06C, in 1906. The length of the heatwave, however, is particularly unusual. The clear and settled conditions have also given rise to glowing sunsets and hazy dawns as dust from the Sahara blows north in the atmosphere. The plume, which was captured on satellite imagery moving towards Britain and Scandinavia, is also contributing to worsening air pollution this week. Hot, still weather is known to increase ground levels of ozone.

Dixon added: "Saharan dust in the atmosphere is generally decreasing in concentration and the remnants of that air is expected to push away as the UK returns to a more mobile Atlantic weather pattern from early next week."

As the country swelters, a patch of snow believed to be the longest-lasting in the UK has melted for only the tenth time, according to records dating back more than 300 years. The patch, known as the Sphinx, forms in a sheltered area of the Cairngorms on Braeriach mountain. It has vanished five times since 2017.

Full forecast, page 54

PHIL WILKINSON



Mice work if you can get it Danny Cassidy's Jack Russell terriers spend their day clearing vermin from farms in the Scottish Borders for his pest control business. Afterwards he lets them play in the fields

Kidneys grown in pigs pave way for transplants

Kaya Burgess Science Reporter

Scientists have taken a big step towards growing "unlimited" organs for transplant after creating the first "humanised" kidneys in pigs.

It is the first time they have been able to start growing solid organs made from mostly human cells inside an animal.

The kidneys were only allowed to develop for four weeks within embryos implanted into surrogate pigs but scientists reviewing the research said it was a "major achievement on the road to unlimited organ production".

Researchers in China hope to be able to use the process to create organs for human transplant within a decade.

Kidneys are the most sought-after organs for transplant, with 5,564 people on the waiting list in the UK — more than three times the number waiting for all other organs combined — and an average wait of two to three years.

A study in the journal Cell Stem Cell says: concludes: "The results indicate that it might be possible to generate a functional human kidney inside newborn pigs, offering an attractive alternative to overcome the shortage of human organs for transplantation."

Scientists at Guangzhou Institutes of Biomedicine and Health implanted human stem cells into pig embryos in a new way to ensure they would develop human rather than pig kidneys. The embryos were implanted into sows and allowed to develop for 25 to 28 days.

The researchers found that kidneys had started growing that were "structurally normal for their stage of development" and were made up of about 60 per cent human cells. The rest of the embryo was composed almost entirely of pig cells, with only a small number of human cells found in the brain and spinal cord of the embryonic pig.

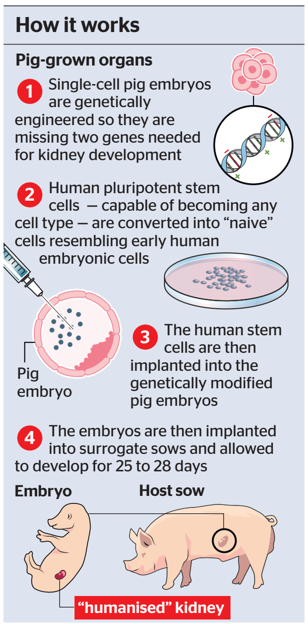
In 2017 the first chimeric embryos, those with genetic material from two or more species, with both human and pig material, were implanted into sows in Spain and grown for three weeks. No organs were grown but it showed that it was possible to integrate human cells into non-human embryos.

Only a fraction of the embryos implanted were successful and scientists have been unsure about how to prevent the human cells within the hybrid embryos from being crowded out by pig cells. Researchers have been able to create human skeletal muscle using a similar process but never solid organs.

In order for the hybrid embryos to develop human kidneys, scientists needed to ensure that the embryo did not also develop pig kidneys.

Scientists in China used gene-editing technology to remove the genes from pig cells that trigger kidney development. This allowed humanised kidneys to develop without competition.

The law in China permits the embryos to be grown for longer, allowing scientists to stop the development after four weeks rather than three. They found that the kidneys had reached the second of three stages of development, known as the mesonephros stage, having formed tubules and the buds that would develop into ureters to connect the kidney to the bladder. The study said that "obstacles still need to be solved" in growing fully human organs.



Diabetics get drug 'better than Wegovy'

Kat Lay Health Editor

A jab that helps users slim down by up to 15 per cent has been approved for use in NHS patients with type 2 diabetes.

Tirzepatide, also known as Mounjaro, developed by Eli Lilly, is a weekly injection that has been shown to improve blood-sugar control as well as aid weight loss.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (Nice) said it should be an option for those who do not have their diabetes under control using existing drugs, diet and exercise.

The drug is expected to be available on the NHS early next year, subject to supply, and could help 180,000 people.

There are about 4.3 million people in the UK with diabetes, the majority of whom have type 2. Diabetes UK estimates that a further 850,000 people may have it but are undiagnosed. If poorly controlled, type 2 diabetes can cause kidney disease, blindness, strokes and heart attacks.

Tirzepatide has outperformed semaglutide — which is sold as Ozempic for diabetes and Wegovy for weight loss — in the latest clinical trials. Nice is running separate tests to assess tirzepatide as a weight loss tool. In an earlier trial, patients on the highest dose lost an average of 15.7 per cent of their body weight.

David Webb, the chief pharmaceutical officer at NHS England, hailed it as "great news [at a] time when there is disruption to the supply of key drugs used for treating people with diabetes".

Hope of £10 Alzheimer's blood test

Rhys Blakely Science Correspondent

British researchers believe that a £10 finger-prick blood test for Alzheimer's could be on the horizon, with a prototype possible as early as next year.

Scientists have said that the discovery of new drugs that appear to slow the progress of the disease have made developing quick tests for Alzheimer's a priority, not least because the treatments are likely to be more effective the earlier they start.

At present there is no simple and reliable method of diagnosing the condition. Patients are typically given memory and cognitive tests, and sometimes brain scans, as part of a process that can take many months and for which there can be long waiting lists.

Work on a finger-prick test is being led by Professor Andrew Shaw of Exeter University, the chief executive of Attomarker, a company that has been working for 15 years on using droplets of blood to diagnose medical conditions.

Speaking at the British Science Festival in Exeter this week, Shaw said the Alzheimer's project had the potential to be "revolutionary".

He said: "There are nine proteins that predict dementia and the idea is that we can do measurements of those and look at how they evolve over time."

Attomarker claims already to have developed a system that requires as little as 0.01ml of blood and can provide results in seven minutes.

A year on, how the King came

The Carolean style of monarchy means more emotion — and more hard work for courtiers, **Valentine Low** writes





Buckingham Palace officials do not like to admit it but when the King ascended the throne a year ago there was a certain nervousness about what the future might hold.

The late Queen had been such a respected figure, and had reigned for so long, that those close to the King were understandably apprehensive about how the public would react to the new monarch.

A source who knows the King well said: "Before he acceded the throne, there was obviously a lot of nervousness around what would happen to the country following the demise of the Queen. And there was certainly nervousness around how people would accept him in those first few days."

However, within a day of her death, when the King made his first address to the nation, in which he spoke of his "profound sorrow" at the loss of his "darling Mama", that nervousness began to dissipate.

"Immediately, things began to steady themselves," said the source. Since then, the source argues, the King has shown himself to be sure-footed, and has enabled the public to refocus on the causes he champions, including the environment.

That much would seem to be borne out by opinion polls. A recent survey by YouGov found that 59 per cent of people thought the King was doing a good job. As for Charles, who became monarch a year ago today, he seems to be thriving: "Someone who knows him well said to me, 'He looks ten years younger and he has got a real sense of purpose about him,'" said the source.

That is perhaps not surprising, given that Charles and his advisers had been planning for his new job for years. Officials had been mapping out what he would do in his first few months — the overall picture, rather than the actual detail — which means that nothing that has happened over the past year has been by chance. "He has been at pains to make sure that as he has gone around in his first year; that he has spent time with a wide range of religious communities, as well as different ethnic communities, showing in deeds rather than just words that he is mindful that we are, as he has always said, 'a community of communities'," said the source. A few weeks after chaos broke out at the Manston migrant centre in Kent, the King sat down for a cup of tea in Aberdeen with refugees who had fled conflict in Ukraine, Syria and Afghanistan.

The style of royal engagements has changed. Charles is more accessible, more visible, more likely to engage with the public than his mother. Some events, such as the reception to mark the 50th anniversary of Ugandan Asians coming to Britain, and the event at Buckingham Palace for members of the Windrush generation, whose portraits were commissioned when he was Prince of Wales, are clear reflections of the King's interests.

Slowly, but unmistakably, Charles has stamped his personality on the role of sovereign. One source close to him says he has "set out his stall" of themes that interest him: the Commonwealth, climate change, culture and community.

Unlike with the late Queen, who was more enigmatic than her eldest son, everyone knows what the King believes in and his passions.

It was a shift, then, when the government told him it did not want him to attend the Cop27 climate summit in Egypt. Charles would have loved to have gone, said a source, but, mindful of his new constitutional role and how being King differed from being Prince of Wales, he accepted the situation and hosted a reception at Buckingham Palace instead.

Along with climate and community, there is another C-word that is more controversial: caretaker. A recent report in The Sunday Times suggested that he has not been the reforming King some might have expected, and had realised that the real changes will come when William is on the throne.

"He needs to be careful he doesn't end up being just a caretaker king," one friend warned.

That suggestion went down badly at Buckingham Palace, where sources argue that the idea that Charles is a stop-gap sovereign is "fanciful". They are equally dismissive of the suggestion that the King has found his new workload, including dealing with daily government red boxes, onerous. That, they say, paints a picture that is unfamiliar for anyone who knows him well. "He has a phenomenal appetite for work," said one source. If his new state duties are an additional burden in his daily routine, the question is not so much whether he is up to it but "how do we fit it all into one day?"

According to one source, if anyone is feeling any strain at all, it may be his officials: "It has surprised some people at Buckingham Palace how much more work is being expected of people."

Robert Lacey, the royal historian, believes the King has introduced significant changes in how the sovereign should fulfil their role, as became apparent when the President Biden visited Windsor Castle in July.

Not only was it a personally warm encounter, it was a meeting of substance when the two men had a briefing from the participants of a climate finance meeting that had taken place earlier outside the castle.

"Biden was not coming for the standard photo opportunity with a royal, which all American presidents like," Lacey said. "He came because of Charles's climate credentials. I find that fascinating, constitutionally. There was one head of state talking to Britain's head of state about an issue of substance, which would not have been the case with the Queen.

"The Queen's forte was 'stay independent, stay out of politics, that's the only way'. Charles is showing another way to do things. We have got an independent head of state who can lend weight to the political decisions of an elected government."

Lacey added: "We always took it for granted that a royal speech should have no feeling in it — but actually Charles has shown the ability to express emotion in his speaking. The power of his early speeches in his reign is that they did contain feeling."

However, there is also a sense that the monarchy has spent the past year in a holding pattern: are there real changes to come?

Anna Whitelock, professor of the history of monarchy at City, University of London, said that so far his reign had promised more than it had delivered. "We have been in an unofficial year of mourning for the late Queen. The monarchy is still very much defined by her and her shadow. The King has not made great strides in defining himself."

Joe Little, the editor of Majesty magazine, said: "If this were a school report, you would say that at the end of the first year a considerable progress has been made but there is still much work to be done, particularly with the streamlining of the institution.

"There are so many palaces and castles that are not occupied for a lot of the time. That is quite tricky. Is there a need for Buckingham Palace to be the office in the way that it was? Could it not become more of a year-round museum?"

Palace officials have insisted that when the refurbishment programme is completed, the King and Queen, still based at Clarence House, will move back in — but many observers are sceptical that this will happen.

Even if the monarchy has not changed radically, the King has shown that, at the age of 74, he is capable of personal change: he is not someone who has ever shown great interest in horse racing, unlike his mother, which meant many people were hugely surprised when he attended Royal Ascot on all five days. "The more he is actively engaged in the whole process of the racing industry, the more interesting and rewarding he finds it," a source said.

He is also taking an active interest in the royal stud. Julian Muscat, an author on royal thoroughbreds, said:

out of darling Mama's shadow

HUGO BURNAND/ROYAL HOUSEHOLD/PA; ROYAL COLLECTION TRUST/HIS MAJESTY KING CHARLES III 2023/PA; CHRIS JACKSON/GETTY IMAGES; YUI MOK/PA





The King ascended the throne a year ago on his mother's death, and released this photo of her by Cecil Beaton in 1968. The Prince of Wales got a kiss on meeting the former England footballer Paul Gascoigne in Bournemouth yesterday, and the Duke of Sussex was given an ice hockey top by Blake McCaughey at the WellChild awards



Harry chokes up paying tribute to late Queen

Laurence Sleator

The Duke of Sussex became visibly emotional last night as he paid tribute to his grandmother, the late Queen, telling the audience that "she is looking down on us all tonight".

Speaking at the WellChild awards for seriously ill children, in London, Prince Harry paused briefly to clear his throat as said that he missed the annual event last year because he was on his way to see the Queen in Balmoral, where she had been taken ill.

Harry, a patron of the charity since 2007, said: "As you know, I was unable to attend the awards last year as my grandmother passed away.

"As you also probably know, she would have been the first person to insist I still come to be with you all, instead of going to her."

His voice broke slightly as he spoke, before he continued, saying: "And that's precisely why I know, exactly one year on, she is looking down on all of us tonight, happy we are together continuing to spotlight such an incredible community."

Buckingham Palace announced the death of the Queen shortly after 6pm on September 8 with a short statement saying that Her Majesty died "peacefully at Balmoral". Her death certificate later said that she died at 3.10pm.

Making his first appearance in the UK since June, Harry returned to present an Inspirational Child award to a six-year-old called Violet, who was born with a rare brain condition. As she walked independently on stage, the duke held her hand before handing her the award.

Referring to his appearance at the 2019 awards, when he was overcome with emotion as he spoke about becoming a parent for the first time, he said: "I'll try not to get choked up this year."

Although the awards were hosted at the Hurlingham Club in southwest London, only a few miles from Buckingham Palace, it is not known whether Harry will visit the King or the Prince of Wales during his trip.

Harry also paid tribute in his speech to parents and carers. He said: "As a father of two — and three dogs, so basically five souls — I am acutely aware of the many joys and challenges that come with parenting, and that's with kids who aren't facing health challenges, so to the parent-carers in this room, you have my sincere admiration and respect.

"You deserve all the assistance you need — whether it's training enough skilled carers to shoulder the increasing demand for a 24/7 care routine or simply providing time and space for you to take a break once in a while.

"You are proof that not all superheroes wear capes."

Before the awards, the duke spent an hour meeting all the award-winners and their families.

Blake McCaughey, 15, who won the Inspirational Young Person's award for those aged 15-18, presented the duke with a Belfast Giants ice hockey shirt with 84 on the back — signifying the year the 38-year-old was born.

"This is great," Harry said, fist-bumping the boy, who has a complex and rare genetic condition that means that he has weakened muscles and cannot eat or drink.

Harry also met Poppy, six, who won the Caring Child award for looking after her older sister, Paige, who has severe epilepsy. She performed a small dance for the duke as he clapped along, and they chatted about dancing and Disney.

Gazza scores a royal kiss

Valentine Low

When the Prince of Wales made a surprise visit to Pret a Manger in Bournemouth to promote his homelessness project, he might have known that a certain amount of chaos would be involved.

What he could not have foreseen was that he would get an impromptu kiss on the cheek from the former England footballer Paul Gascoigne.

Prince William, 41, made the visit as part of his five-year Homewards project to end homelessness, which was launched in June. Pret a Manger has announced that it will find work for 750 people living rough or under the threat of homelessness over the next five years.

Gascoigne, 56, came across the royal visit by chance after the store was mobbed by hundreds of members of the public.

After their 30-second exchange, Gascoigne said: "I've met him a couple of times and met him at Wembley [at the Euro 2020 semi-finals]. He loves his football. I climbed over a few chairs to talk to him and gave him a peck on the cheek. He's a good-looking guy. He said, 'I even got a kiss'.

"He said he has been watching us from afar. I help the homeless here in Bournemouth — I often give them ciggies and sandwiches."

"John Warren [the late Queen and now the King's racing adviser] told me in April that when he spoke to the future king 20 or 30 years ago, he said racing was a bit like gardening: until you had your own garden, it was something you didn't think too much about. Once you do, you have to tend it and weed it and plant and develop, enhance it. Now he is being true to his word."

The King and Queen are expected to go to Doncaster to watch his horse Desert Hero race in the St Leger this month.

For that, credit should doubtless go to his wife. This is the woman about whom, not long ago, there was a question mark over whether she would be Queen.

Now, according to most commentators, she is looking increasingly confident in the role.

It was notable recently that she took time away from the couple's Balmoral break to carry out two engagements in London. In the words of one source, she "lightens the load" for the King.

"They so enjoy each other's company. They remain each other's best adviser. In moments of doubt or anxiety, they are each other's problem solver." However, challenges lie ahead. One is the state visit to Kenya in the autumn, which, in the words of David Anderson, professor of African history at the University of Warwick, "could be a bit ticklish".

With memories still fresh from William and Kate's unfortunate tour of the Caribbean last year, there are concerns that activists could raise the issue of Britain's treatment of the Mau Mau rebels in the 1950s.

There is also the question of President Ruto, 56, who was charged with crimes against humanity by the International Criminal Court (ICC), although they were later dropped. Anderson said: "The truth is that Ruto's reputation internationally is badly tarnished by his past.

He is distrusted in Europe and North America because of his previous associations with organised political violence — in the post-election violence of 2008, which resulted in his appearing before the ICC, but also in the 'ethnic cleansing' of the late 1990s in Kenya's Rift Valley."

In turn, Ruto does not trust Britain, says Anderson. With Britain keen to maintain Kenya as a strategic ally and Ruto hoping to promote himself as an international statesman, he will roll out the red carpet — but it won't be a visit full of great personal warmth. "It will be business-like," Anderson said.

A deliberately unspectacular start, leading article, page 25

One's first report card of the reign

Jack Blackburn
Valentine Low

FAMILY MANAGEMENT
King Charles is very unlucky in this department. Among constitutional monarchs it is perhaps only George VI, who had to deal with the aftermath of his brother's abdication, who has faced such family difficulties upon taking the throne.

Fortunately, the troublemakers in Charles's family do not appear to have inflicted permanent damage. Prince Harry and Meghan attracted huge publicity about his memoirs and their Netflix series, but now appear less relevant than ever.

Prince Andrew remains an embarrassment but perhaps not a major problem. Despite being glimpsed on a family trip to church, the idea of any public rehabilitation seems remote.

The King was swift to appoint his sister and younger brother as counsellors of state and has begun incorporating Prince William's children into the Firm. The waters seem calm. For now.
Grade: B+

DIPLOMACY
Never forget that the King is really there to do the government's bidding. He may have been put out that No 10 did not want him to go to the Cop27 meeting in Egypt, but the Downing Street view was that he would be more useful shoring up our relationship with our European neighbours. His first state visit was to Germany, where he went down a storm. A meeting in London with President Biden also went well.

Britain needs a figurehead, a diplomat and a salesman to help to define its post-Brexit role on the international stage. After years of preparation, the King has taken to this task well.
Grade: A

HEAD OF THE COMMONWEALTH
Maintaining the Commonwealth will be a significant challenge for Charles, but he has not made tremendous strides towards it in his first year. He is yet to visit a member state but it is expected that his autumn tour will be to Kenya.
Grade: B-

POLITICS
"It will no longer be possible for me to give so much of my time and energies to the charities and issues for which I care so deeply," the King said in his first broadcast. This recognition that he could not be quite so outspoken as before was necessary. Many had feared that the King's tongue could derail his reign.

His first Christmas message, praising health workers at a time when the NHS was beset with strikes, went down well. But next year may be trickier, as he faces an election.
Grade: A-

MODERNISING THE MONARCHY
From the day after the Queen's death, when the King stepped out of his car by Buckingham Palace to talk to members of the public and allowed one of them to kiss him on the cheek, it was clear that Charles's reign was going to look different from his mother's.

At his coronation he tried to balance tradition with modernity, reflecting multicultural Britain while putting on the sort of show that diehard royalists would expect.

But there have as yet been no seismic changes. It may be wide of the mark to call Charles a caretaker king, but so far he is no revolutionary.
Grade: B-

News

Fixing hospitals with Raac 'will cost billions'

Kat Lay Health Editor

Dangerously crumbling concrete is present in more hospitals than had been thought and it will cost billions to fix the problem, MPs were told.

Hospitals are having to restrict the number of patients on each floor, and nurses have a hotline to property management departments in case of problems.

At a hearing of the public accounts committee, health bosses said that reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (Raac) was just one problem of ageing NHS buildings.

Hospitals are having to shut units, moving patients out and closing theatres "day in day out" because of health and safety issues caused by a £10 billion maintenance backlog.

At the same hearing Department of Health officials were accused of using "smoke and mirrors" to defend the New Hospitals Programme, designed to deliver 40 more by 2030.

MPs were concerned it was short of money and were sceptical of the chances of it meeting its goal.

The NHS had identified Raac at 41 sites in England, including at seven hospitals where it was used throughout, requiring a full rebuild.

NHS England wrote to hospitals this week urging them to ensure they had identified any potential Raac, which caused some schools to close because of concerns about the lightweight concrete.

Julian Kelly, chief financial officer of the NHS, told MPs that more sites were being checked.

Analysis published today by the Lib Dems found that almost two million patients and 42,000 NHS staff lived in the catchment area or worked at seven hospital sites affected by Raac.



At Queen Elizabeth Hospital in King's Lynn they are taking no risks

Olivia Blake, a Labour MP on the committee, said that the committee heard "directly from staff" in hospitals who are "having to conduct daily monitoring of Raac" in case there was an incident and that this was "having an impact on the clinical work".

She said wards had to close "very urgently" and matrons were "on speed dial to property management". She also said that hospitals were "managing admissions based on weight, so they can't have too many people with all the equipment they need on the first floor".

The government has previously said that seven hospitals — Airedale, Queen Elizabeth King's Lynn, Hinchingbrooke, Mid Cheshire Leighton, Frimley Park, West Suffolk Hospital and James Paget Hospital in Great Yarmouth — would be rebuilt. They were brought in to the New Hospitals Programme earlier this year, replacing seven others which will now not be finished by 2030.

A report from the National Audit Office (NAO) in July said that the programme faced delays, which meant the target would not be met.

Mark Francois, a Conservative MP, said part of the problem with the programme was about definitions. He added: "According to the NAO report … those that fall within the definition so far, you've built one, the Dyson Cancer Centre in Bath.

"So in three years, you've built one and you're now telling us you're going to build all the other 39 within seven years? Because on your progress to date, you're not going to get anywhere near it, are you?"

Shona Dunn, permanent secretary at the Department of Health, said the original listed 40 new hospitals "will not all be built by 2030", but that the programme was planning to deliver the 40 listed in the spring.

Treasury officials rejected proposals to include all seven of the hospitals worst-affected by Raac in the New Hospitals Programme in 2020, a public spending official said yesterday. Tim Phillips, the NAO's director for health value for money, told a Westminster Health Forum conference that only two were initially earmarked for funding.

The addition of the full list this year caused "disruption and delay" to other projects, he said.

Lessons in small talk for struggling students

Nicola Woolcock Education Editor

New university students need icebreakers in tutorials because they do not know how to socialise after Covid, a vice-chancellor has said.

Students at university when the pandemic struck developed resilience but those following them missed out on socialising.

They now need to be taught social networking to avoid absenteeism, according to Professor Katie Normington, vice-chancellor of De Montfort University in Leicester.

She told the annual conference of Universities UK, which represents vice-chancellors, that younger students had a lack of community, particularly those with poor mental health or financial problems.

Students who are about to start university were 15 or so, a formative time for social development, when the coronavirus struck. Normington told the event in Manchester that students who had not formed friendship bonds might find it harder to walk into rooms, and students who suffered loneliness could give up.

"Our seminar rooms and our classrooms are going to have to do a lot more social networking, a lot more ice-breaking," she said. "They were 15 to 16 when Covid hit. That's the age when you're out there testing boundaries and meeting people. This generation never had it.

"This is going to cause more absenteeism and lack of sense of belonging, particularly for those students who are declaring mental health issues or suffering financially."

Professor Nic Beech, incoming vice-chancellor of Salford University, said students who had been through Covid were coming into universities that were in "huge transition".

He said: "Lots of staff are facing struggles. Everything is shifting. We have, in a sense, the perfect set of conditions for mental health challenges to be amplified."

He said universities should be aware that a recent rise in drug use by students would often be caused by self-medication and loneliness.

Robert Halfon, the universities and skills minister, told the conference he would like to see 50 per cent of students taking degree apprenticeships and for them to become as prestigious as Oxbridge degrees.

Last year fewer than 50,000 students started the apprenticeships, which allow them to take a degree and get on-the-job training without paying tuition fees.

He also said tuition fees would not increase because of the cost of living crisis.

Professor Arif Ahmed, the Office for Students first director of free speech, told the conference that university teaching "really can't function" unless students were able to hear a diverse range of views on all kinds of topics, including those that some might find difficult to cope with or offensive.

Quarter of young people seek help for eco-anxiety

Adam Vaughan Environment Editor

Almost three out of ten young people have sought counselling and support from medical professionals for "eco-anxiety", research suggests.

It is defined as "the distress caused by climate change where people are becoming anxious about the future", and a poll of 2,000 UK adults suggests that many are also seeking help from professionals.

The poll, conducted by Opinium for Triodos Bank, suggests that 14 per cent of the population have sought help, a figure that more than doubles to 29 per cent among 18 to 34-year-olds. The share falls to 14 per cent in 35 to 54-year-olds and 3 per cent in those who are older. The research shows that 18 per cent of the overall population report suffering from eco-anxiety, rising to 33 per cent in 18 to 34-year-olds.

Eco-anxiety is not considered a mental illness by the Royal College of Psychiatrists, but mental health professionals said a growing number of people were asking for help at a time when global carbon emissions were still going in the opposite direction from what scientists say is needed to rein in dangerous temperature rises and extreme weather.



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TIMES PHOTOGRAPHER RICHARD POHLE



Cold feet Teemu Leppanen searches through about 10,000 hand-carved "lasts" at the shoemakers John Lobb in St James's Street, central London, established in 1849

Mrs King's misery over Mambo No 5

Constance Kampfner

"A man with a good wife is the luckiest of God's creatures," reflected Paul Edgecomb, the death row supervisor in Stephen King's 1996 novel *The Green Mile*.

It is a sentiment the horror writer himself must have had in mind when he was threatened with divorce by his wife, Tabitha, because of his love of the song *Mambo No 5* by Lou Bega, which topped the British charts in 1999.

"I played that a lot," King, 75, told Rolling Stone magazine. "I had the dance mix. I loved those extended-play things and I played both sides of it. And one of them was just total instrumental.

"I played that thing until my wife just said, 'One more time, and I'm going to f***ing leave you'."

King appears to have listened. The couple, who have three children, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary two years ago.

The author of *Misery* predicted that his latest book, *Holly*, about a string of disappearances during the pandemic, may not go down well. "A lot of people — particularly people on the other side of the Covid issue and the Trump issue — are going to give it one-star reviews on Amazon. But all I can say to those people is, 'Knock yourself out'."

Strange tale of the shrinking Foyles fiction section

Peter Chappell

When a rumour went around that Foyles bookshop in Bristol had got rid of its fiction section, the literary editor of The Sunday Times couldn't believe it.

Yet on visiting the shop, Johanna Thomas-Corr realised it was true, with just a "few tables of novels" on sale.

Foyles appears to have cut back on its fiction in order to prioritise non-literary products, to the confusion of customers and upset of staff.

It was "sad and incredibly strange", Thomas-Corr said, for items such as diaries and posters to take pride of place on shelves meant for books.

Tracy Chevalier, the author of *The Girl with a Pearl Earring*, demanded a response from the bookseller and told The Times it would be "shooting itself in the foot" by offering less fiction.

She added that she hoped Foyles was not copying Barnes and Noble in the US, which replaced books with gifts before retreating and placing titles front and centre again.

"I am really surprised if Foyles is going in this direction," she said.

A Foyles bookseller in London told The Times that the provision of fiction in the bookshop she worked in had decreased by over 50 per cent in three years, whereas gift products such as calendars and book lights have increased.

The bookseller said she found it "sad" and "quite depressing" that the store had been turned into a "souvenir shop".



Thomas-Corr tweeted that Foyles in Bristol offered a "few tables of novels"

"When you are a bookseller, you're not just a sales assistant, it's a bit more. With the gifting offer increasing, you're forced to be a sales assistant," she said.

On its website, Foyles, which was bought by Waterstones in 2018, advertises board games, notebooks and tote bags, alongside paperbacks and signed editions. Following the sale, James Daunt, the managing director at Waterstones, said it would mean both chains would be "better positioned to champion the pleasures of real bookshops in the face of Amazon's siren call".

Clare Alexander, the chairwoman of the Aitken Alexander literary agency, whose authors include Pat Barker and Sebastian Faulks, said she found Foyles' decision "very surprising" given that Waterstones is increasing its fiction offering as it benefits from a post-pandemic boom and the BookTok trend.

Last year, the publishing industry enjoyed a record-breaking year, with fiction sales up by 9 per cent to £797m. Non-fiction saw a decrease of 2 per cent but still accounted for £1 billion.

A Waterstones bookseller said Foyles had changed because the store did not want to "compete" with Waterstones. Foyles was contacted for comment.

A Foyles spokesperson said: "Our Foyles Bristol shop is one of our smaller shops and therefore has a carefully curated selection of fiction. The range of titles on offer in any bookshop is principally dependent on space. Fiction remains pivotal to [our] success."



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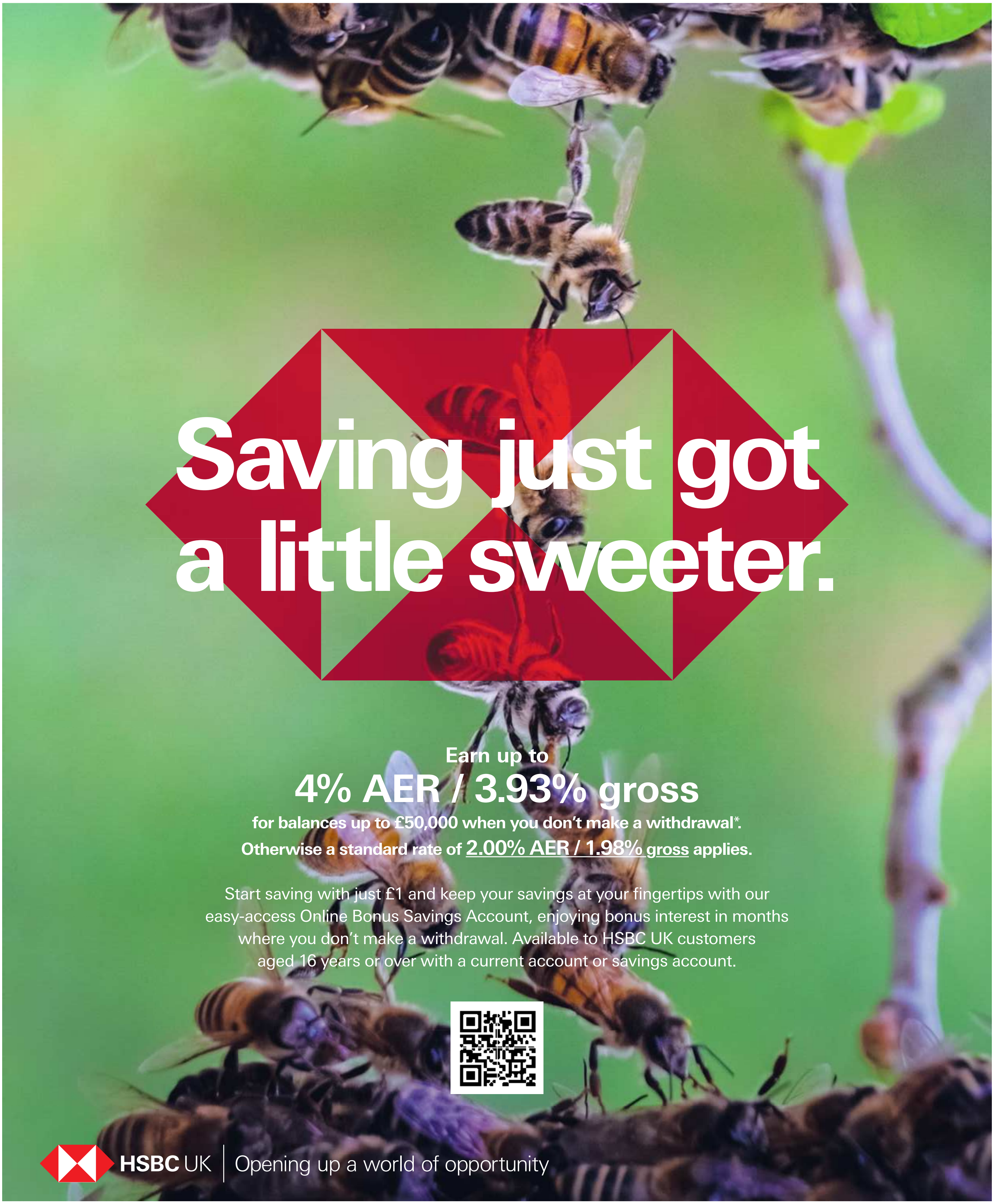
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TMS

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Politician was rather handy

Our obituary yesterday of Bill Richardson, former governor of New Mexico, noted his world record. In 2002 Richardson shook 13,392 hands in eight hours, going far past the 8,513 palms grasped by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1907. Richardson made it his goal to shake 1,000 hands a day but some politicians are chirophobic. George Washington never touched paws and the germophobic Donald Trump avoided them, though in 2017 he had a 29-second shake with Emmanuel Macron, right, in which the French president's knuckles turned white as neither wanted to be first to let go. "Great guy," Trump later said. "Loves holding my hand."



Adlai Stevenson, who twice lost a presidential election, knew it was all a sham. "The saddest part is that a candidate must reach into a sea of hands, grasp one, not knowing whose it is, and say, 'I'm glad to meet you,'" he said, "realising that he hasn't and probably never will 'meet' that man."

ON YOUR MARKS
Voting on the regeneration bill in the Lords on Wednesday was extended by three minutes because several lifts are broken. There's a metaphor for the crumbling country. Parliamentarians normally have eight minutes to get to the lobby when a division is called. It used to be six but I was once told, perhaps untruthfully, that it was increased after Sebastian Coe, then an MP, arrived late to vote. It was felt that if he couldn't get from his office in six minutes, no one could.

The actor Stanley Tucci didn't start out dreaming of the silver screen. He told a Fane event that when he was a child he wanted to be an architect but was scuppered by his hopelessness at maths. "Every building would fall down," he said. Given the state of Britain's schools today, that is not necessarily a disqualification.

OFF THE WALL
Lots of fake blue plaques have been sent in. Peter Lowthian says there is one in the town of Riverside, Iowa, that notes that Captain James T Kirk, commander of the Starship Enterprise, will be born there in 2228, while Gordon Elliot says that a pub in Chalton, Hampshire, put up a plaque saying "Jane Austen never lived here" after having so many visitors looking for the author's house in nearby Chawton.

UNTOUCHABLE
The Rugby World Cup starts tonight and New Zealand have already got one trophy. Their politicians won the parliamentary world cup yesterday for the sixth time out of eight, beating Ireland's Oireachtas 10-3 in Paris. France were also undefeated but missed the final on points difference after an 8-7 victory over Australia described as "trench warfare". Seven countries took part, plus a team from the European parliament who beat the Lords and Commons 22-12 to decide the wooden spoon. Britain had begun the tournament with a 48-5 walloping by South Africa, though this was partly explained by the presence of Eddie Andrews, the deputy mayor of Cape Town, who had previously played 23 internationals at prop for the Springboks. Couldn't someone have given Jonny Wilkinson a peerage?

PATRICK KIDD

'Cult massacre' was actually a yoga class

Kieran Gair

The motionless bodies were face-up on the floor of a remote seaside observatory, with arms outstretched and legs apart. A panicked call was made to the police.

A "ritual mass killing" had occurred at the North Sea Observatory in Chapel St Leonards, Lincolnshire, police were told, prompting heavily armed officers to rush to the spot with sirens blaring.

Upon arrival, however, the police were met with looks of bemusement. The café was not the site of a massacre but a yoga class run by Millie Laws, and the "victims" had been meditating.

Worried members of the public had raised the alarm after peering through the observatory's triangular windows shortly before 9pm on Wednesday, Laws said.

Laws, of Unity Yoga, said she was leading a class of seven, guiding them into a "corpse pose". The objective of the pose is to imitate a corpse by keeping the body still to achieve total relaxation. "I'd set up a semi-circle of candles and I was walking around with a drum," she said. "About halfway through I saw some people come up to the glass and have a look in but I didn't think anything of it. They did walk off very quickly, though."

According to workers at the observatory's Seaside Café, the emergency caller was concerned that the yoga instructor was involved in "some kind of ritual mass killing". Laws believes the people who called the police had mistaken her loose-fitting yoga outfit for "a robe, like the type some cult leader might wear".

She admitted it was "better to be safe than sorry", adding: "I do feel sorry for the people who genuinely thought something dark was going on but obviously we've all taken it very light-heartedly."

The café, which regularly hosts yoga classes in the evenings, was quick to allay any fears, writing on Facebook that the seaside village of almost 4,000 people did not need to worry that a "mad cult" was secretly operating at its premises by night.

They wrote: "If anyone heard the mass of police sirens in Chapel St Leonards at 9.30pm last night then please be reassured. They were on their way to the observatory after someone had reported a mass killing in our building, having seen several people lying on the floor which actually turned out to be the yoga class in meditation."

It added: "We are not part of any mad cult or crazy clubs. Thank you to Lincolnshire police for their prompt response. I can't imagine for one moment what would have being going through their minds on the way."

The force confirmed the call was made at 8.56pm "with good intentions", adding that "officers attended … and we're happy to report everyone was safe and well."



Despair at Victorian terrace's demolition

Developers have knocked down the façade of a Victorian crescent in Cardiff without permission as conservationists campaigned to protect the city's architectural heritage (Ali Mitib writes).

The frontage of Guildford Crescent had been all that remained of the terrace of six buildings after restaurants and Gwdihw, a much-loved music venue, were demolished to make way for flats in 2019.

A campaign had persuaded the council to impose restrictions to save the façade — hundreds of people took to the streets to oppose the work and 20,000 people signed a petition. However, the crescent was destroyed to make way for a 30-storey block of flats on the site. On August 17 Galliford Try, a London-based developer, submitted a planning application asking to rebuild the façade on the grounds that the building was no longer structurally safe.

It demolished the frontage before the council's planning committee could discuss the application. The developer has been advised by the authority to cease all demolition works. A Cardiff council surveyor has since visited the site and said that the rest of the frontage must be removed for safety reasons.

The demolition was condemned by local politicians and residents. Jo Stevens, the MP for Cardiff Central, said: "I doubt I'm the only person who finds this deliberate and brazen cultural vandalism shameful but unsurprising." George Howard, 34, a local resident, said: "It is shameful that a music venue like Gwdihw was closed and now the lovely old buildings demolished to make way for this monstrosity."

The council is "considering the expediency of formal action, which could include measures preventing further development at the site until the matter is resolved".

Galliford Try said that the façade had had to be demolished owing to immediate safety concerns.

"As a responsible contractor, we take health and safety seriously and took swift action to prevent any potential incident," a company spokesman said. "The façade will be recreated as part of the development to retain the historic character of the crescent and ensure the community benefits from the streetscape."

WALES NEWS SERVICE







Guildford Crescent, Cardiff, before work began. The preserved frontage of the terrace has been destroyed before flats, below, are built

Study 'designed to fit climate narrative'

Kaya Burgess Science Reporter

The editor of a leading journal has rebuked a climate scientist who claimed that he tailored his research to ensure its results fitted with the "preferred narrative" on global warming.

Dr Patrick Brown is a director of the climate and energy team at the Breakthrough Institute, an environmental research centre in California.

He was the lead author among seven scientists who had a paper published in the Nature journal last week which found that climate change had led to an increase in wildfires in the state. He then posted a series of tweets in which he said that while climate change had contributed to an increase in wildfires, he had decided not to investigate other factors that may also have contributed.

He said that his research "looked at the effect of [global] warming in isolation but warming is just one of many important influences on wildfires with others being changes in human ignition patterns and changes in land use and vegetation [and] fuels".

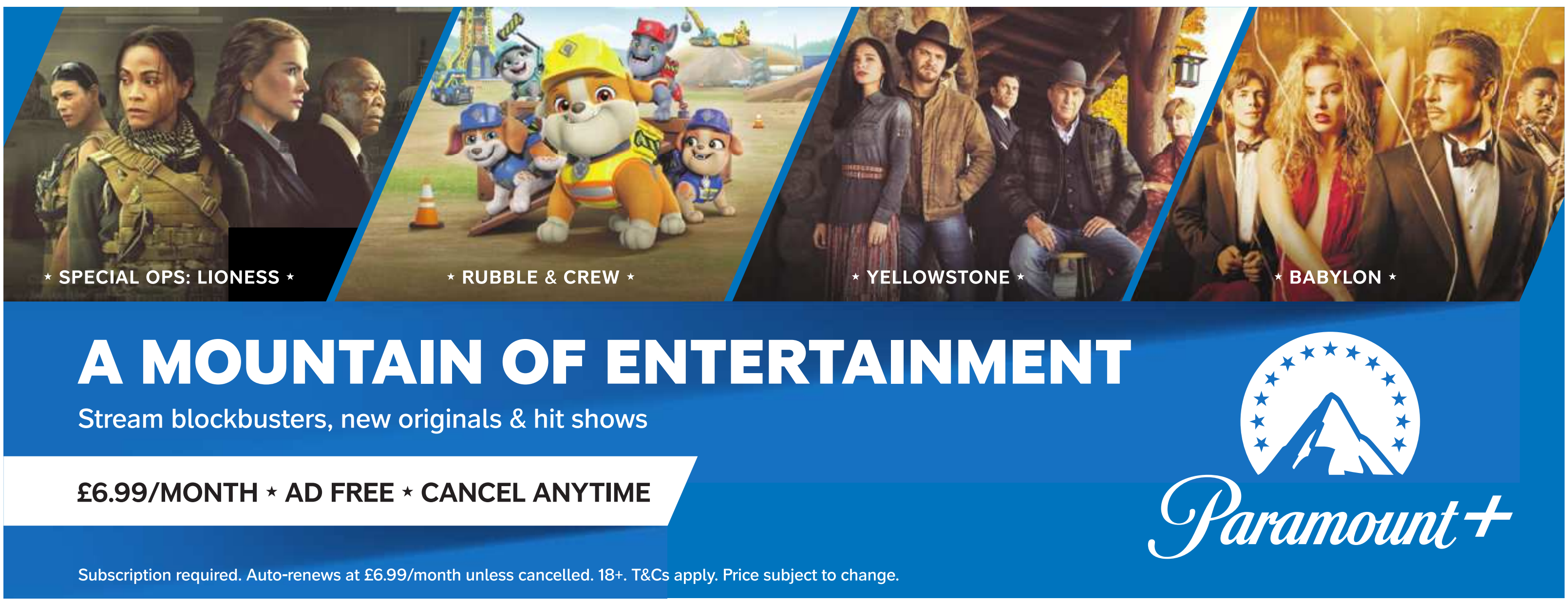
Brown added that he "wanted the research to get as widely disseminated as possible" and said that this led him to "mould the presentation of the research to be compatible with the preferred narratives of the editors and reviewers of high-profile journals".

Nature denied it had any preferred narrative. Dr Magdalena Skipper, its editor, said: "We are now carefully considering the implications of his stated actions. Certainly, they reflect poor research practices and are not in line with the standards we set for our journal."

She added that researchers must always use the most appropriate data and said: "When researchers do not do so, it goes against the interests of both fellow researchers and the research field as a whole. To deliberately not do so is, at best, highly irresponsible. Researchers have a responsibility for their research which they must take seriously."

It has emerged, however, that when scientists who peer-reviewed Brown's paper asked why the study had not examined non-climate factors, the authors defended their approach as scientifically valid. They responded formally that "accounting for changes in all these variables and their potential interactions simultaneously is very difficult", adding: "Studying the influence of warming in isolation is valuable."

Brown denied he had "manipulated data" but said that he designed his study to "focus on metrics that will generate the most eye-popping numbers". He wrote on the Free Press site: "You might be wondering at this point if I'm disowning my own paper. I'm not. On the contrary, I think it advances our understanding of climate change's role in day-to-day wildfire behaviour. It's just that the process of customising the research for an eminent journal caused it to be less useful than it could have been."



‘Manifesting’ success could lead dreamers to bankruptcy

Sophie Freeman

It’s an increasingly popular idea that we can “cosmically attract” success to ourselves — but those who believe in the practice of manifesting are at higher risk of bankruptcy, a study suggests.

Researchers found they were more likely to be drawn to risky investments and believe they could achieve an improbable level of success quickly.

“We defined manifestation as the belief that if you send out your desires to the universe through positive thoughts, visualisation or acting as if goals have already come true — like writing a pretend cheque to yourself — the universe will deliver what you desire,” Lucas Dixon from the University of Queensland, an author of the study, said.

“Manifesters seem to be overly optimistic, believing they are more likely to be successful, in shorter timeframes, meaning they may overestimate the odds of success.

“Focusing on positive aspects of one’s life, as manifesters tend to do, helps people feel good and be more resilient. However, it may lead to downplaying negative but important signs of business fragility, such as mounting debt.”

For the study, the researchers measured the manifestation beliefs of 375 people. They were asked to rate on a seven-point scale how much they agreed with statements such as “I attract success into my life with the help of the universe or a higher power”, “My soul, spirit or higher self helps me attract success” and “The universe or a higher power sends me people and events to aid my success”. Their answers were then analysed along with their finances.

For every point people scored higher on the manifestation scale, they were about 40 per cent more likely to have experienced bankruptcy and about 30 per cent more likely to have investments in cryptocurrency, though not more likely to have invested in shares.

Believers are “more likely to feel they have control over fairly uncontrollable aspects of their life — whether they get rich quick or become famous”, Dixon said.

“In business, this could lead to an opportunity cost, where time is spent focusing on more uncontrollable long-term goals rather than controllable short-term goals.”

He also said it could lead to a focus on more symbolic actions, such as visualising success, rather than instrumental actions, such as managing finances.

Dixon said of the findings, which are published in the Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin: “Another possibility is that people develop stronger belief in manifestation after they have had experiences with get-rich-quick schemes or having been bankrupt.”

Dixon said he was surprised by how widespread the belief in manifestation seemed to be. One in three of those he surveyed had some degree of belief. “This may be due to the ongoing popularity of books like *The Secret* and *Think and Grow Rich*, but also the rise of social media influencers,” he said. As of today, videos with the hashtag “manifestation” have been viewed 42.8 billion times on TikTok.

There are also a number of celebrities who have apparently manifested their dreams into reality. Oprah Winfrey said in 2007 on *Larry King Live*: “The way you think creates reality for yourself.” Jim Carrey said he was so sure he would become famous that he wrote himself a cheque for $10 million for acting services rendered. “I gave myself five years,” he said. He was later able to cash the cheque after establishing a successful acting career.



TIMES PHOTOGRAPHER JAMES GLOSSOP

The exhibition contains a vast array of Ken Dodd’s public life in entertainment — and some revealing personal notebooks

A tattyfilarious tribute to Doddyness

Exhibition Carol Midgley

Happiness!
Museum of Liverpool
★★★★☆

How tickled I am to be reporting from *Happiness!*, a new exhibition on the life and work of Ken Dodd, the mad-haired, quick-fire, buck-toothed comedian whose incisors were so pronounced he once said he could eat a tomato through the strings of a tennis racket.

While Dodd’s stand-up shows were legendarily long, the Museum of Liverpool exhibition is slightly more succinct, though it still features about 200 objects set in a theatre theme to reflect that performing on stage was Doddy’s great love. Which is why you couldn’t get him off and he often overran by hours. Such is the vast treasure trove of memorabilia kept by his widow, Anne, and made available for the display that the curator, Karen O’Rourke, said they could have filled the entire building at Liverpool’s Pier Head. “We were both hoarders,” Anne said.

The first thing you’ll see on your entrance (ooh I say, missus) is, obviously, a gigantic tickling stick (“Have you, Madam, experienced the rejuvenating powers of my tickle stick?” he’d say. Then, perhaps, “By Jove, I needed that”). His unmistakable voice is everywhere as you walk around the sections: Doddy cracking gags, Doddy being interviewed, the video films lasting about six minutes because they couldn’t bear to cut them any shorter. I can see why because it’s really the only way to do justice to his brand of surrealist comedy.

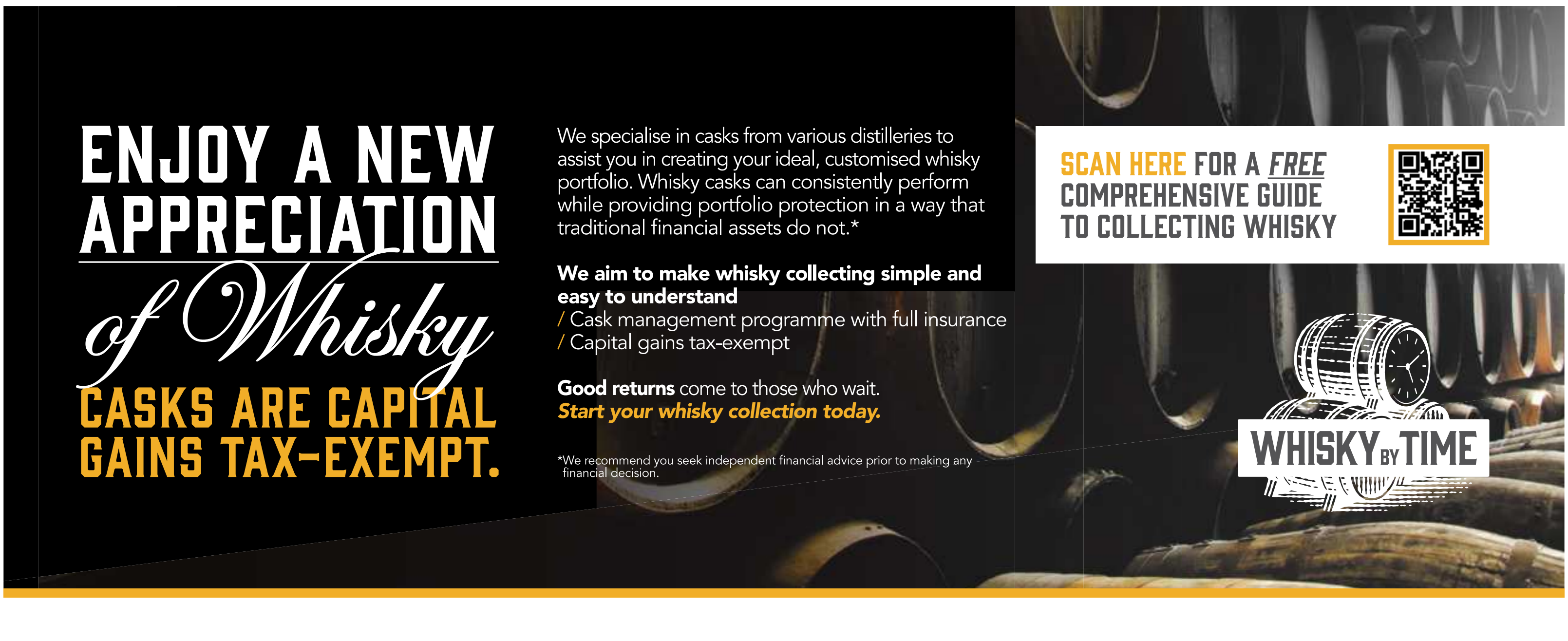
The visual centrepiece is Dodd’s trademark big red “Huury Furry Moggy Coat”, which he joked had been made from 28 cats, “all toms”, and was run up by Anne on her sewing machine. There’s the Diddy Men and his treasured Dicky Mint puppet, with the familiar buck teeth.



But the most interesting exhibits are some of his personal notebooks, which he told his wife to burn after his death but which, after some soul searching, she didn’t. She has let the exhibition have only a few of the 1,000 in her possession, but they reveal a great deal. He critiques his own act, something he did his entire career, marking jokes as “good”, “fair”, “fair to poor” or just “no”. In another he admonishes himself: “I am ruining my life by doing such long shows.” If the exhibition shows anything it is how very much Dodd crammed into his long life — music, acting, comedy, charity — performing right up until a year before his death in 2018 at the age of 90.

You might not spend as long here as you would at one of his protracted shows, but there’s plenty to exercise your “chuckle muscles”.

The exhibition opens tomorrow and runs to Mar 3, liverpoolmuseums.org.uk



PAID FOR CONTENT

Stepping up the fight against fraud

Over the past five years, the cost of fraud in the UK has risen to a record £1.2 billion. One company is taking innovative steps to stop the criminals



In our time-poor, quick-fix society, it's so easy to click on a link without really thinking, with devastating consequences. In the UK today, around 3 million people a year are victims of fraud and anyone can be deceived.

Whether it's an urgent text regarding a fake delivery, a heartfelt request to send a loved one emergency funds, or an opportunity to increase life savings, fraudsters are increasingly opportunistic.

But criminals have a formidable opponent. Payment leader Visa has been at the forefront of fraud prevention for decades and is now stepping up its efforts even further to help the UK win the fight against fraud by introducing a range of innovative technologies and issuing a call for further cross-industry co-operation on the issue.

Later this year, the company is convening a Fraud Innovation Summit to increase cross-industry efforts to tackle online scammers and to reduce current fraud rates by even further than the 10 per cent suggested by the UK government.

Part of the job is educating the public to be more aware when making online payments. A recent survey found that one in four under-35s planned to use social media for their holiday shopping this summer, with nine in ten leaving it until the last minute. Unfortunately, one in six admitted that this means they were less likely to check for fraud when buying, making them more vulnerable to thieves.



But Visa's core strength is in its innovative fraud prevention solutions. Its VisaNet system – the largest consumer financial transaction processing system in the world – has been using AI for over 30 years to combat fraud and the company has also pioneered "tokenisation": a powerful technology that conceals sensitive payment data.

Tokenisation has been a game-changer in the fight against fraud, and Visa is now bringing its experience and expertise in fighting card fraud to real-time payments.

Here, Mandy Lamb, above, Visa's managing director, UK & Ireland, explains how the company is leading cross-industry efforts to tackle fraud on all fronts.

What is Visa doing to bolster the security of its business clients and their customers?

Security is at the very heart of our network: millions of British businesses and consumers depend on the integrity of our payments ecosystem, so we have to be vigilant in order to protect each and every transaction, big or small.

That's why we have invested more than £8 billion globally in the last five years to enhance our fraud prevention measures and network security, and we also have a dedicated cyber security team in our London HQ.

We also offer additional services to our clients, tailored to their exact needs, that can protect them from attacks that even they cannot see.

Last year we proactively prevented an estimated £22 billion in global fraud. Just seven cents in every $100 spent on our network is now affected by fraud – this is one of the lowest rates of any payment method.

Of course, we are not doing this alone – co-operation is vital and we are proud of the strong partnerships we have with the banking sector to deliver these results.

Fraud is big business. How can you reassure firms that you're tackling it head-on?

If you use Visa, the risk of fraud is lower than it has ever been: in the last three years, we have reduced UK card fraud on our network by 28 per cent – more than the government's 10 per cent target, and in line with industry calls for a 25 per cent reduction.

But even after 60 years in the business, there is still more to do.

> "Visa has reduced fraud by 28% in the past three years

What is token technology?

Visa's technology can ensure the 16-digit number found on a credit or debit card is "tokenised" when people pay – turned into a unique string of numbers containing no meaningful data, rendering them unusable by anyone else for any transaction other than the one they authorised.

We know how devastating scams and fraud can be for British businesses and consumers, which is why we will always invest in the very latest security.

But the whole industry needs to work together to make even more progress. That is why we are organising a UK Fraud Innovation Summit, so we can identify the innovations and technologies that will find new ways to protect consumers.

Tell us what new technology Visa is employing in the field of real-time and direct payments?

Real-time and direct payments are becoming more popular – but this also makes them more attractive to scammers. The banks are working hard to ensure there are robust protections in place so consumers can use these services with confidence.

We are supporting these efforts by bringing a similar level of analysis and fraud detection to real-time payments. If we are able to deliver the same degree of protection for direct payments as we do for card payments, we could stop up to 40 per cent of all scam account-to-account transactions in certain circumstances – making a big impact on the £485 million lost to Authorised Push Payment scams in the UK last year.

Finally, how do you give consumers the information and tools they need?

Sadly, fraudsters are always going to go after the weakest link and all too often that is consumers themselves – our friends and family. I know that most of us like to think that we would be able to spot a scam easily, but the reality is these criminals often know how to play on our worst fears in order to get their hands on our savings.

That is why we work so closely with our clients and consumer organisations to share vital information about the different types of scams that are out there, as well as simple steps to help people keep themselves safe. And, in the background, we will continue to do everything we can to stop these criminals before they are able to destroy lives and livelihoods.

Loss of civility leaves America in a pickle
Gerard Baker
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Comment

Labour has a secret reformer and her name's Sue

Forget the Blairites, Starmer knows the former mandarin's ideas for overhauling Whitehall are pivotal to his success

Patrick Maguire



@PATRICKKMAGUIRE

Even in an age that has seen Rory Stewart and Alastair Campbell sell out the Royal Albert Hall, Ed Balls reborn as a star of daytime television and Nadine Dorries self-identify as political historian, it is still surreal to hear of spontaneous, rapturous applause greeting the arrival of a career civil servant in a room full of strangers. But Sue Gray, late of partygate, is no ordinary civil servant — indeed, no longer a civil servant at all.

Sir Keir Starmer's new chief of staff reported for duty this week a woman liberated. In a brief speech to her new charges at Labour headquarters on Tuesday she spoke of her relief that her six difficult months of purgatory were over. Then, grasping intuitively the Labour argot of solidarity, she thanked party staff and made them a promise: "You had my back. I'll always have yours."

After a decade as Whitehall's judge, jury and executioner on ministerial indiscretion, Gray arrived at Blackfriars with a reputation so forbidding that some expected — hoped, even — that her introductory remarks would sound a little more like the old Johnny Cash lyric about the vengeful boy who shared her name: "My name is Sue! How do you do? Now you're gonna die…" That day will doubtless come for those in Starmer's office who do not adjust to Gray's ruthless style, but for now she is an attentive presence at her leader's right hand: watching, learning.

She was in the room for Monday's sweeping shadow cabinet reshuffle and oversaw dozens of appointments to the most junior, inconspicuous posts too. On Wednesday morning she joined the small team that prepares Starmer for prime minister's questions. Gray is everywhere, her presence a reminder that she is still by far the most important appointment the Labour leader has made this year.

Those words again: "You had my back. I'll always have yours." But whose back, and to what end? It is an important question whose answer reveals that Starmer's preparations for government amount to something altogether more substantial and ambitious than a karaoke imitation of New Labour.

That might sound a bit rum after this week's March of the Living Blairites headlines, none of them exactly discouraged by the Labour leadership. But to judge these things

> Gray was appointed to perform open-heart surgery on the state

on faction alone — the movement's very favourite pastime — often obscures more than it reveals. For instance, Ed Miliband (still, despite all the briefing against him, the shadow climate secretary) is clearly not a Blairite. By that I don't just mean he worked for Gordon Brown. No, so damning was Miliband's critique after 2010 of the New Labour years that some of his old colleagues get very angry if you call him a Brownite.

So how does one make sense of his survival in an economic brief that remains integral to Starmer's plans for government? Or, indeed, Angela Rayner's move to shadow Michael Gove at levelling up, a brief that spans everything from local government finance to housing and devolution?

Here's how: Sue Gray. Despite what some Tories will tell you, she was appointed not as a thank-you for her investigation into Boris Johnson but to perform open-heart surgery on the British state. Starmer himself conceives of politics not as an exercise in score-settling or competitive historiography but in terms of institutional reform. This is a man so absorbed by the processes of the public sector and their limitations that he ended his tenure as director of public prosecutions by recommending the CPS rethink its internal filing system to reduce its reliance on paper.

As much as that reads as a parody of a parody of the Labour leader, there is an important point here, made all the more serious by the economic inheritance that surely awaits him next year. I understand that next week Labour will publish the document which will form the basis of its next manifesto, agreed in tortuous late-night negotiations with trade unions and activists at its National Policy Forum in July. Its most important passage will read thus: "Labour's fiscal rules, as set out by shadow chancellor Rachel Reeves, are non-negotiable. They will apply to every decision taken by a Labour government, with no exceptions. That means that Labour will not borrow to fund day-to-day spending, and we will reduce national debt as a share of the economy."

Those words are testament to this: Starmer and Reeves now exercise such authority with such confidence that the Labour Party has no option but to sign up to such a restrictive, self-denying ordinance. Licking his wounds in 1993, the defeated Neil Kinnock put the predicament his

STEFAN ROUSSEAU/PA



Sue Gray's ruthless style can already be detected in the party's upheavals

north London neighbour faces like this: "If it had been possible to have led the Labour Party of 1983 or 1987 or 1992 by Attlean acerbity or Bevanite evangelism, Wilsonian wiliness or Callaghanite bonhomie, then the task would have been easier, not to say more entertaining for everyone else. In the event, however, the condition of the party made management an obligation, so I got on with it."

Starmer, however, is more than a reluctant prisoner of circumstance. Reforming the state and public sector is what he wants to do — what he knows he can do. He is irritated by the short-termism and siloed thinking that in his eyes mean Whitehall decision-making is too often an exercise in one-upmanship and hoarding power. To which anyone familiar with Gray's back catalogue might say: hang on, who was better at that game than Sue Gray? But unlike others who arrived in Downing Street with similarly grand ambitions — Dominic Cummings, say, or David Cameron's barefooted guru Steve Hilton — Starmer believes she knows how to make the changes he wants to make, and make them last.

It is, as one senior Labour official privy to Starmer's thinking tells me, "unglamorous but serious work", focused on the knotty, chronic challenges identified by his five missions: stagnant growth and productivity, a broken NHS, social mobility, net zero. And yes, much of it will be led by Blairites similarly sceptical of statist solutions: in the coming months Liz Kendall, Labour's new welfare spokeswoman, will unveil proposals to reform the labour market and encourage the long-term sick back to work. Like Blair himself, Wes Streeting is an evangelist for technology in the health service. But it will also mean Angela Rayner negotiating growth plans and decade-long funding settlements with local authorities to prevent councils like Birmingham going bust; and ministers forced to surrender power to new committees that cut across the existing structures of Whitehall.

Little of this quickens the pulse. And as Peter Mandelson discovered when he sought to reform the centre of government in Blair's first months in power, only to be thwarted by Gordon Brown and his overbearing Treasury, it ain't easy. But perhaps this time it will be for a girl named Sue.

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Birmingham council crisis is only the start

Squeezed between government cuts and a huge care bill, authorities can't afford basic services

Emma Duncan



There's some stiff competition in the local-authority financial mismanagement stakes. Birmingham city council, which has just issued a Section 114 notice — declared bankruptcy, in council speak — is in contention for one of the top spots. When everybody else worked out half a century ago that you have to pay women the same as men for the same work, the council was looking the other way and has been landed with an unexpected bill for £650 million to £760 million this year. That's after paying a £1.1 billion settlement for the same offence.

My money, though, is on one of the smaller contenders. Some councils with limited means are showing extraordinary form. On an annual budget of £20 million, Woking council has run up a debt of £1.8 billion — £17,300 per resident — buying dodgy shopping centres. Thurrock spaffed £1 billion up the wall, as our late lamented prime minister might have said, on a wide range of exciting investments. Slough and Croydon are in similar trouble. All have issued Section 114 notices over the past couple of years.

Although Birmingham has been Labour-run for 11 years, the messes these councils have got themselves into have not been the result of overspending by crazed lefties. Thurrock and Woking were both under Tory control when most of the bad decisions were made. Individual mismanagement was in part to blame, but there's also a broader problem.

You probably think councils distribute their money widely across a vast range of services, like street lighting, potholes, swimming pools, parks, schools and whatnot. So did I, until Birmingham's collapse led me to call lots of people in local government. Actually, two thirds of their budgets, on average, go on social care. That's partly the burden of looking after the growing number of older people, but it's also because the number of disabled adults and children in care has been rising. A former local authority chief told me that 507 children had absorbed a seventh of his budget. Their number included a boy who cost £1 million a year because he was so violent he needed three people to look after him all the time.

> More councils are likely to go under in the next couple of years

Councils have no choice but to pay such bills. Their duty towards older people who lack the funds to pay for their own care is enshrined in law. Spending on other services is optional. That's why the proportion of their cash going on care is rising, and that going on everything else is falling. Cuts are harshest in poor areas, which are more dependent on central government funding and have less scope for increasing their revenues by raising council tax. Gateshead council has shut two swimming pools this year; it used to have 16 libraries and now has five; it no longer has any community centres or youth outreach workers.

At the same time as the demands on councils have been growing, revenues have been shrinking. That's largely because councils were the principal victims of George Osborne's austerity programme in the aftermath of the financial crisis. Central government funding to local authorities has been cut by about 60 per cent since 2010. All in all, councils' spending power fell, on average, by about 29 per cent in real terms over the period.

This unfortunate conjunction of circumstances has three consequences. The first is growing financial instability. One of the reasons councils have been making dodgy investments is that in order to let them earn some money to make up for the cuts, Osborne gave them more financial freedom. Some of them used this to invest sensibly; some did not.

More councils are likely to go under in the next couple of years. It won't just be badly managed ones: well-managed ones are sinking too. A group of urban councils reported last month that one in ten were thinking of making a Section 114 application this year and two in ten next year.

Second, local democracy is being weakened. More and more central government funding comes in little pots of money that councils have to bid for, through the Towns Fund or the Levelling Up Fund, that are created by Westminster and Whitehall. It's all very well making councils bid for funds to refurbish theatres or put chessboards in parks if that's what's needed, but not if local people think a library or a youth club is more important. Funding councils in this way is inefficient, patronising and anti-democratic. It's also not what people want. Voters like councillors more than government ministers, and 61 per cent of them want more decisions taken locally.

Third, and most important, the squeeze on local government services is making Britain look and feel poorer and uglier. Councils have a more immediate and visible effect on people's lives than anything national government does, and because care swallows up most of councils' spending, the funding for mending potholes, cleaning off graffiti and clearing up rubbish has been slashed. A grimy, depressing environment is not just bad for our morale: it's also bad for our economy if Britain looks like a developing-world country that's not worth investing in.

This problem is soluble. Government could provide more money by allowing councils to keep 100 per cent of their business rates. It could give them more from central coffers, which ultimately means finding a way of stopping the NHS swallowing an increasingly large share of the tax take. It could give councils more freedom to raise extra money, such as through the tourism tax that Birmingham proposed to levy on hotel bills during the Commonwealth Games, and which the government nixed. We need to do some or all of this if Britain is to look like the kind of country we want it to be.

THUNDERER

Forget cheese ban, Sadiq, focus on the bread and butter

Jawad Iqbal

Transport for London's only job is to run the capital's road and rail network efficiently and safely. Which is why its decision to ban posters advertising artisan cheeses from the Tube network on the grounds that the products are "unhealthy" is bonkers.

TfL blocked the ads from Cheese Geek on the grounds that they did not comply with its advertising policy, which "uses the Food Standards Agency's model to define foods that are high in fat, sugar and salt". This is somewhat disingenuous. The guidelines are not meant to be applied blindly and are open to interpretation using judgment and common sense — qualities that would appear to be sorely lacking at TfL. The ban also makes little dietary sense. Cheeses do indeed contain fat but are also nutritious, containing B12, protein and calcium.

It is not the first time TfL has banned the promotion of foods it deems unhealthy. In July, a poster for a West End play featuring a wedding cake had to be redesigned after it was censored by TfL officials. A protein company was banned from running "beach body ready?" ads on the network. Apparently the ads encouraged body image issues. Which geek in the employ of TfL is paid to sit in final judgment on the right body image, and based on what qualifications? Junk food adverts have been banned by the network since 2019, ostensibly aimed at helping reduce childhood obesity. Even so, obesity continues to rise. There is no real joined-up thinking either: the advertising bans co-exist with station concourses packed with shops selling all kinds of unhealthy food and drink.

> Mayor's leadership style sets the tone for much of this nonsense

TfL is ultimately the responsibility of Sadiq Khan, the London mayor. He pushed through the move to end "body shaming" adverts and rushed through the ban on junk food advertising. Last year, Khan warned commuters that "staring" can be a form of sexual harassment. His leadership style sets the tone for much of this sanctimonious nonsense aimed at commuters. It would be better for the mayor and transport bosses to focus on the actual core business. TfL is under severe financial pressure — it has a projected £475 million funding gap — and is heavily reliant on short-term government funding deals. Turning down vital financial income from harmless adverts while insisting on treating passengers as idiots who cannot be trusted to make their own decisions isn't going to help.

Jawad Iqbal is a freelance writer

Martin Samuel Notebook

Right kit is essential at this proper Essex sendoff

The most important of all the least important things, Jürgen Klopp, Liverpool's manager, called football. And there will be those who don't think it's even as significant as that. Kicking around a bag of wind. Who cares?

People care. Stand outside a cemetery, or a crematorium, for a day and you'll see exactly who cares. Family matters above all — MUM, DAD, NAN, GRANDAD dominate the floral tributes — but then football. Descendants of the working class depart decked out in their team's colours.

Want to know why a green theme is so unusual at funerals across England? Barely any professional football teams here play in green. Plymouth Argyle, Forest Green Rovers, Norwich City. Yet go to Glasgow or Edinburgh, and green is the colour. Celtic, Hibernian — florists north of the border will deal in green every week, just as their number in Manchester and Liverpool will deal almost exclusively in shades of blue or red.

We went to my cousin Keith's funeral last week, in Pitsea. It's one of those towns on the way to Southend-on-Sea that the old East End moved to in the 1970s. Staunch West Ham United territory. Feel free to wear claret and blue was the family's instruction. When we arrived we noticed some folk had taken this to extremes. Football shirts. Actual West Ham shirts. I held back and waited to file in beside my cousin Gary.

At which point I need to explain, we're a big family on my mum's side. She was one of 11. My grandparents' hobbies were gasping for breath and falling over. I have cousins, children of cousins, and certainly children's children of cousins that I would walk past in the street, oblivious. So it was just as well that another cousin, Paul, arrived and told us we were queueing outside the wrong funeral.



Later, correct service located, when we came out there was another funeral waiting to go in, and some of those mourners were wearing West Ham shirts too. So that's a lot of colourful attire for a very sad afternoon, and also for a sport that doesn't matter. You've got to hope that whatever's up there doesn't support Millwall.

Angelic anthem

Outside the crematorium, they called Keith's family and a crowd the size of the old South Bank stepped forward and, as we prepared to enter, a familiar beat started up. I turned to my wife.

"*Gabriel*?" Will, Paul's son, turned round. "Roy Davis Junior," he said. And it was. Large Records, on import, 1996. Peven Everett's voice. Peven Everett's heavenly trumpet. What can I say? It's one of the greatest garage songs ever written. And because there were so many of us to seat, we got to hear it twice.

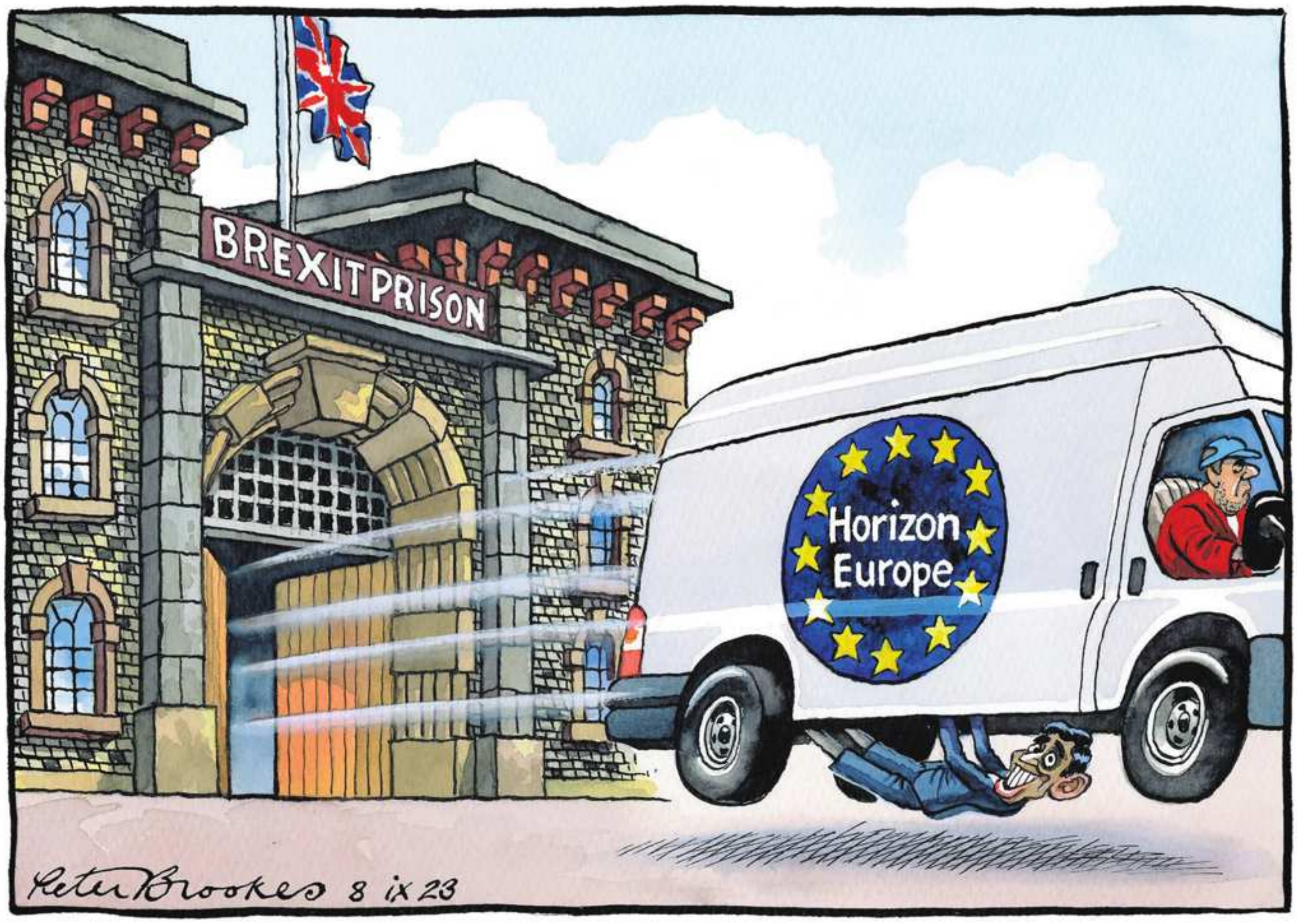
I've been to humanist funerals and they can be cold. Take away the religion and hope often leaves with it. Humanism may be realistic, but also brutal in sad times. *Gabriel* changed that. Lightly spiritual — "He was, an archangel of love"; positive — "He had good news, good news"; and uplifting — "Be the one to show, your love overflowing". Everyone entered smiling. "Gabriel, play…" It worked. Absolutely worked. Cousin Keith's parting gift. Seek it out, you won't be disappointed.

Dust to dust

Actually, the best address I've heard at a funeral was for my wife's Uncle Sid. It was held in a church, but he wasn't a religious man. "Sid didn't believe in God," the vicar began. "So I'm hoping that, wherever he is now, he'll be very surprised…"

He made me laugh, Sid. He was a dustman who did the Daily Telegraph crossword every day — the proper one, not the concise — and divided his time between the History Channel, a bottle of whisky and 60 Benson and Hedges, resulting in a lung disease that brought forth the most spectacular, explosive fits of coughing. During one, disturbing even by his standards, he was offered a glass of water.

"Nah, thanks," rasped Sid, between gasps and horrendous excavations. "I had some water once. Tasted of f*** all."



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Loss of civility leaves America in a pickle

The rise of a rather aggressive new sport is bringing out the worst in people, and indicative of a sharp decline in respect

Gerard Baker

@GERARDTBAKER

A couple of my daughters have fallen in with a rough crowd. In the local park on idle afternoons they get into fights with other knots of New Yorkers that can get ugly and occasionally result in interventions by the authorities. It's painful, of course, but as a parent you always know it can happen if you live in New York long enough.

My girls haven't become part of an urban street gang, swearing oaths in blood or subjecting themselves to violent initiation rituals. They have started playing pickleball.

If you haven't heard of the sport that has swept America in the past couple of years, you will. It's a scaled-down version of tennis, or a scaled-up version of ping-pong minus the table, with a court about a quarter the size of a tennis court, a low net, solid "paddles" rather than racquets, and hollow plastic balls.

It is the fastest-growing participation sport in America, played by an estimated 36 million people, up from just a few million five years ago. It's popular with celebrities and there is a nascent professional league.

But there's a problem: it is bringing out the very worst in everyone. Where my daughters play, there are frequent angry clashes. Long lines of picklers waiting their turn get vocal and even physical at any sign of slow play; serious picklers assert their priority over the neophytes and fun-seekers. There are often shouting matches between local residents whose quiet read on a park bench is rendered impossible by the insistent popping of paddle on ball. Local authorities have had to step in and even expel the sport from some parks where invasive picklers have painted over basketball territories.

> Large numbers of Americans deeply dislike each other

The Great Pickleball Wars are reflective, I think, of something deeper that has gone very wrong in America over these past few years: a disintegration in civility. In public and private social interactions the normal rules of association have been replaced with something like *Fight Club* protocols. There's a soul sickness that is eating away at the very bonds of community.

Am I overstating it? If this were happening only in this famously rough-edged city, you might say so. But cities across the country are grappling with the fallout, regulating it, disciplining the most contumacious participants, even banning it altogether. The pickleball crisis is national. So too is a much wider decline in basic expressions of mutual respect.

Polling suggests that large numbers of Americans now deeply dislike each other, ascribing bad faith and evil intent to people whose views they don't share. As an academic paper a few years ago put it, "motive attribution asymmetry for love versus hate drives intractable conflict". Through analysis of survey data, it tracked how hostile factions in America now see each other in the way Israelis and Palestinians do.

Of course, the tenor of modern politics is heavily to blame: the dramatic increase in polarisation of the past few decades has been turbocharged in the age of Trump. But it goes far beyond political discord. The kinds of daily interactions Americans report often have nothing to do with politics. I'm sure the pickleball antagonists where I live in a Democratic bastion of New York share the same view of Donald Trump, and it isn't positive.

What we have instead is a social sickness that seems to render people more willing to openly confront each other, when in the past the restraints of discretion and civility held sway.

Covid dramatically exacerbated the problem. The panic induced by lockdowns and mask mandates encouraged us to see every social interaction as a potentially deadly one — and people retreated deeper into their own safe spaces.

My most powerful recollection of the pandemic was on one of my runs early in the days of plague. It was a

> Social media has turned us all into solipsistic automatons

cold spring morning and few people were venturing out.

As I jogged gently through Central Park, my mask pulled down so I could actually breathe but keeping my lumbering gait a very safe distance from any other human being, an enormous middle-aged woman in the distance bedecked in a veritable haberdashery of masks and doing what I supposed she thought was a "power walk", bellowed at me: "Put your f***ing mask on, you f***ing asshole! Are you trying to kill me?"

In the same spirit of the modern social encounter, I was tempted to tell her that her diet, pitiably mitigated by a stroll in the park, would kill her way before any random germ I might shed within 50 yards of her.

Technology has also contributed to the phenomenon. The oxymoron that is "social media" and the personal technology that enables it has turned us all into solipsistic automatons glued to screens 12 hours a day, replacing basic human contact with electronic objectification.

The ascendancy of the culture wars has also made things much worse. It means all politics is personal now, so we don't just disagree with each other, we see differing views on matters of sex and gender and race, for example, as personal affronts, even "threats to our safety".

Two decades ago in *Bowling Alone*, the sociologist Robert Putnam first tracked the steady atomisation of American society. His book noted the curious and steep decline in the 1990s in membership of once-thriving bowling leagues, but also in so many other forms of association that — as Alexis de Tocqueville famously observed two centuries ago — characterised the lives of ordinary Americans.

Now, we have something different. Americans may still be Bowling Alone. But they are Pickleballing Together — and instead of forging social union, the experience seems to be making them realise only how much they detest each other.

Letters to the Editor

Letters to the Editor should be sent to letters@thetimes.co.uk or by post to 1 London Bridge Street, London SE1 9GF

Onshore wind farm

Sir, The updates to the planning regime for onshore wind are an improvement (reports, Sep 6; letters, Sep 7) but we could do much better. We are still in the following dubious position: by the government's own estimates onshore wind costs 4.4p/kWh whereas gas costs 11.4p/kWh. Even including pessimistic grid balancing costs with much more intermittent renewables than we at present have, the total cost for wind would very likely be less than 10p/kWh. So it is cheap, plentiful and has one of the lowest carbon footprints available: lower than solar, lower than biomass, and 98 per cent lower than gas. We should be introducing it out as fast as possible. The public support decarbonisation, yet despite great effort from some wind supporters in Whitehall, the government has still not delivered a planning system that matches these aspirations.
Dr Laurence Stamford
Senior lecturer in sustainable chemical engineering, University of Manchester

Sir, Your leading article "Not Costing the Earth" (Sep 6) omits to mention the use of hydrogen as a green fuel. As you note: "Britain, being a blowy island, is a great spot for wind energy…but the wind does not always blow." Hence we need a way to utilise and store excess generation capacity. Battery storage of sufficient capacity will be increasingly expensive as demand soars, and has its own cost on the environment. Hydrogen is much more versatile. It can be used in cars and will be the fuel of choice in future in a number of countries; it can also be used to replace gas and oil-fired boilers for heating homes. The cost of converting existing gas boilers to burn hydrogen is minimal compared with that of installing a heat pump. It should be a core element of our energy strategy, but like other solutions will need a co-ordinated effort from the government and the energy industry, including a degree of subsidy to encourage successful transition.
Peter Needleman
London NW7

Sir, Anyone contemplating backing the idea of land-based wind farms should travel the Spanish coastal road from Algeciras to Tarifa, where hosts of these giant structures cover what were previously rolling hills. The visual pollution is immense: the area now resembles an industrial estate. The extra cost of building the turbines at sea is well worth it in the long run.
Crawford Macdonald
Weybridge, Surrey

Corrections and clarifications

ipso. Regulated

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Patients' right to a second medical opinion

Sir, The key point highlighted by the horrific story of Martha Mills is not that patients and their families should have the right to challenge their doctors, as they already have that right, it is that the culture of the ward at King's College Hospital did not welcome challenge — from patients, families or anyone else. Small wonder, then, that the existing right of Martha's parents to ask for a second opinion was not drawn to their attention. That is what now needs to change: we must make it easy — and confidential — for patients and families to ask for a second opinion. There must be posters, helplines, leaflets and media coverage, but most of all there must be a change of culture. Any doctor, from house officer to professor, should welcome a request for a second opinion; not to do so is unprofessional. We all want to trust our doctor, but trust is based on open discussion: it is not the same thing as blind faith.
Stephen Dorrell
Former health secretary

Sir, This is a tragic case and Martha's parents deserve sympathy and support for their campaign. Clearly failed communication at every level, along with the crisis in NHS staffing and systems, caused this tragedy. Pancreatic trauma is unusual and has a high mortality: it should be managed by specialist centres. This harrowing case highlights institutional arrogance within parts of the medical profession. This is more prevalent in, but not confined to, specialist centres. The profession needs to address this.

It saddens me, as I approach retirement, that a law has become necessary to enable a patient's relatives to tell doctors to seek a second opinion. It is their right, and they should not even need to ask — it is a fundamental part of good medical practice. I hope my profession takes heed of this sobering wake-up call.
Simon Cole
Consultant surgeon, Abingdon, Oxon

Sir, Your leading article ("Martha's Rule", Sep 6) argues for a right to a second opinion while Dr David Jeffrey (letter, Sep 6) cogently explains why, when a second opinion might be needed to overrule the diagnosis of an "arrogant doctor", others, including that doctor's colleagues, will find it difficult to challenge the diagnosis. As many have argued, in your pages and elsewhere, until the "full disclosure, no blame" culture adopted in aviation to stop arrogant pilots ignoring their colleagues' legitimate concerns is taken up in the NHS, further tragedies will continue to occur.
Mark White
Chichester

Sir, You refer in your leading article to avoidable deaths in hospital, and "the instinct to cover up". The distress of the death can be compounded by its aftermath. My daughter Gaia died aged 25 of an unexplained brain condition shortly after admission to hospital. Her death was the subject of an inquest and the coroner ordered the hospital to ensure the attendance of such medical witnesses to give oral evidence as were "best able to assist". There were no independent clinical witnesses. The hospital successfully opposed my request for an independent neurologist for an unexplained brain death. One can speculate on the hospital's reasons for its choice of witnesses but the court's conclusion was that the cause of death was "unclear". The investigation was uninformed and uninformative — but perhaps a convenient outcome?
Dorit Young
London N1

Sounding last post

Sir, I never expected to agree with the Communication Workers' Union, but it is right in saying that Royal Mail appears to be running down its letters business ("£10 for book of stamps as postage prices rise again", Sep 6). In my recent letters of complaint I have said that Royal Mail seems hell-bent on destroying its own business, examples being the fact that there is no postbox nearby with an afternoon collection, so we are more likely to use email, and that local management appears to provide daily deliveries in one street but not in another. It is to be hoped that Ofcom's present investigation might lead to an improvement, but I am not optimistic. No wonder so many of us are using other means of communication.
Clive Fletcher-Wood
Redland, Bristol

Sir, Earlier this week the postman delivered several letters: a first-class letter from Bingley was postmarked 21 days before it arrived; a second-class card from Swindon was postmarked 11 days before it arrived. Both were correctly and clearly addressed and correctly stamped for their size and weight. The postmarks on two other items were not clear enough to read.

You report that the price of a first-class stamp is to rise from £1.10 to £1.25; a large letter going first class will rise by 35p and a second-class large letter will cost an extra 40p. Christmas cards are already on display in local charity shops. From the 1930s to the 1960s the Post Office ran a publicity campaign encouraging people to "Post early for Christmas". Posting cards this month would avoid paying the extra postage and would give cards a good chance of arriving in time.
Rosie Anderson
Anna Valley, Hants

Sir, The price of stamps may be going up but unless you are a very early riser the post will have been collected before you get to the box, so first-class post has no chance of the recipient getting it the next day. It is all very well saying that the post will not be collected before 9am, as seems to be the norm these days, but unless the postie remembers to change the date note one has no idea if today's post has been collected.
Dave Kitson
Sherborne St John, Hants

Changing gender

Sir, The government has dithered too long over the promised guidance for schools on what they should do when a child wants to adopt an alternative gender identity ("Sunak to block ban on children changing gender", Sep 7). It should publish the consultation draft and let its proposals be tested by public discussion. The government seems to have forgotten that no child can change their sex. Once you remember this, it is obvious that no new legislation is needed. It is already clear that schools must consider the welfare of all pupils and keep them safe. That means clear rules and reality-based risk assessments. This cannot be done while pretending that some girls are boys, some boys are girls and some pupils have no sex at all. Nor can it be done if mentions of any child's actual sex are made taboo by bans on "misgendering". All teachers, and all pupils, need to know what sex every other child is, and to be able to say so and act accordingly. No one should be forced to pretend to believe something that is untrue.
Maya Forstater
Sex Matters

MOTOR CYCLES IN THE CHILTERNS

FROM THE TIMES SEPTEMBER 8, 1923

To the Editor of The Times.
Sir, The road which runs through this portion of the Chiltern Hills is a narrow country lane, with many awkward turns and corners. Nearby it passes through a small village situate on a hillside. It would be difficult to find a road more totally unsuited for motor-cycle races or trials. In ordinary driving great care is required owing to the narrowness of the road and to the frequency of curves or corners. On returning home this week complaint is made that this road has, during more than one recent Sunday, been used for a series of motor-cycle trials or races, to the nuisance and danger of the whole locality. One credible witness has told me that he only saved the life of a boy by violently pushing him into the fence; another, an expert in motor driving, spoke of the careless way in which a dangerous corner had been driven round. It is not easy for an ordinary villager to institute prosecutions, but the use of such a road for motor-cycle trials or races is an abuse against which a strong public protest is required, and of which the danger and nuisance extend beyond the local limits. I have found attached to a tree a huge yellow placard with a finger-sign pointing along the road which leads to and through the neighbouring village. If cycle trials are allowed along such a road, it is of not much use to attack individual drivers to obtain some measure of security in country walking or driving. It is no wonder that motors are detested in country lanes. As one who uses a motor in the country I desire to protest, in the name of the whole locality, against this outrageous conduct, and would ask the support of your powerful paper to prevent its repetition. I am communicating with all the local authorities who have police control or are responsible for the roads; but a larger public are directly interested.
Yours faithfully, PARMOOR,
Parmoor, Hambleden.

● Sir, It would be of great advantage to motorists and cyclists generally if the signposts on our roads — not only the main roads, but the subsidiary ones also — bore at the top of the shaft the name of the place in which the post is situated.
Mr Llewelyn Andrew,
Hale, Cheshire.

THETIMES.CO.UK/ARCHIVE

Bedbug renaissance

Sir, We worry a lot about the decline in biodiversity so we should welcome the news from France about bedbugs making a public comeback after their alleged extinction there ("Bedbug nuisance gets under people's skin", Sep 6), appearing not only in cinemas but on the Marseilles Metro. The French are in good company. More than a decade ago bedbugs turned up in New York in the Empire State Building, at the Metropolitan Opera House, and on subway stations in Brooklyn, Manhattan and the Bronx.

The French blame international travel for their reintroduction. This is not a new hypothesis. As John Southall said in his 1730 *Treatise of Buggs:* "By shipping they were doubtless first brought to England, so are they now daily brought." Perhaps they have travelled to France from Dundee, whose ladies in 1947 suffered from an epidemic of red bands of blisters on the back of their calves: they had been bitten by bugs living in a groove on the seats of a tram. Men escaped; Harris tweed trousers were too thick for the bedbugs' beaks.
Hugh Pennington
Aberdeen

Local school breaks

Sir, Regions or local authorities should be free to have school holidays at differing dates, as was the case in the 1950s ("Summer school", letter, Sep 5). Lancashire cotton towns could choose a fortnight in May/June but not at the same time so that Fylde coast resorts such as Blackpool were not overwhelmed. Bolton had a fortnight in late May and early June but also had an additional week in early September, when the weather was lovely, as it is now. Schools in the town started later, and I still remember my first day at Park Road Junior School as September 13, 1956.
Christopher Daniels
Canterbury

Lecturers' strike

Sir, I retired as a university lecturer 13 years ago and every year since I have seen my pension increase at a much faster rate than a lecturer's basic pay rate. No wonder UCU members are taking industrial action (news, Sep 7).
Malcolm Howard
Banstead, Surrey

Talking point

Sir, Further to Giles Coren's assertion that no one talks to their friends about car insurance (Notebook, Sep 5), I can assure him that since I moved to Suffolk from Highgate it has totally filled the gap left by the "How much is your house worth?" and "Your school fees are, WHAT?" conversations.
Carolyn Kerr
Southwold, Suffolk

Bankrupt Brum

Sir, I was heartened to read your report on Venice charging tourists an entrance fee (Sep 6). Birmingham has more canals than Venice and attracted 45.5 million visitors last year, according to the West Midlands Growth Company. This suggests a simple way to resolve Birmingham city council's financial problems (reports, Sep 6 & 7): we should charge each visitor £2 a trip. We have more canals and could charge half the fee that Venice imposes.
Richard Jeffs
Edgbaston, Birmingham

Daily Universal Register

UK: King's accession gun salute in Green Park and at the Tower of London to mark the anniversary; Heritage Open Days begins. **France**: Rugby World Cup 2023 begins.

Nature notes



The sun came out and a willow warbler began to sing. The lilting melody rang out over the orchard twice, then fell silent. The sun went in. Already, the bird had passed through on its way south. We won't hear this music again until the willow warblers return from Africa next spring. For such tiny birds, willow warblers have a long journey to make, but Yorkshire to sub-Saharan Africa is a relatively short jaunt in comparison with the odyssey undertaken by willow warblers breeding in eastern Siberia. They too head for southern Africa, but their journey is via the east Asia/east Africa flyway and can be up to 12,000km long.
JONATHAN TULLOCH

Birthdays today



Jos Buttler, *pictured*, cricketer, Lancashire CC, vice-captain of the England team that won the World Cup (2019), 33; **Linda Bennett**, founder (1990), fashion retailer LK Bennett, 61; **Ruby Bridges**, civil rights activist, the first African-American child to attend an all-white public elementary school in the south of the United States, 69; **Anne Diamond**, TV presenter, *Good Morning . . . with Anne and Nick* (1992-96), 69; **Christoph von Dohnányi**, conductor, honorary conductor for life, Philharmonia Orchestra (London), 94; **Michael Frayn**, playwright, *Noises Off* (1982), and novelist, *Spies* (2002), 90; **Martin Freeman**, actor, *Sherlock* (2010-17), *The Hobbit* film trilogy (2012-14), 52; **Paul Hanagan**, flat racing jockey, champion jockey (2010, 2011), 43; **Judith Hann**, broadcaster, *Tomorrow's World* (1975-93), and writer, 81; **Dame Margaret Hodge**, Labour MP for Barking and former minister, 79; **Miles Jupp**, comedian, actor and host, *The News Quiz* (2015-19, BBC Radio 4), 44; **Patrick Kidd**, journalist, diary editor at The Times and author, *The Weak are a Long Time in Politics* (2019), 47; **James Mattis**, US secretary of defence (2017-19), former US Marine Corps general, 73; **John McDonnell**, Labour MP for Hayes and Harlington, shadow chancellor of the exchequer (2015-20), 72; **Geoff Miller**, cricketer, England (1976-84), chairman, England cricket selectors (2008-13), 71; **Louise Minchin**, news presenter, *BBC Breakfast* (2011-21), 55; **Dave Myers**, chef, *The Hairy Bikers* TV programmes, 66; **Vice-Admiral Sir Roy Newman**, vice-patron, Royal Naval Association, flag officer, Plymouth, and commander, Central Sub Area Eastern Atlantic (1992-96), 87; **Pink**, singer, *Funhouse* (2008), 44; **Bernie Sanders**, US senator, the longest-serving independent in US congressional history, 82; **Andrew Scattergood**, chief executive, The Royal Parks charity, 48; **Victor Ubogu**, rugby player, Bath and England (1992-99), 59.

On this day

In **1991** the electorate of the Yugoslav republic of Macedonia voted for their homeland to become an independent state.

The last word

"The evening's the best part of the day. You've done your day's work. Now you can put your feet up and enjoy it." Kazuo Ishiguro, writer and winner of Nobel prize in literature, from his novel *The Remains of the Day* (1989)

Steady Reign

The King has enjoyed a solid, deliberately unspectacular first year. But the monarchy must evolve if it is to retain the nation's affection in an age of declining deference

It was a hard act to follow. Elizabeth II ruled for so long and so consistently that, as with Victoria, it was hard to imagine a world without her. When on her death, one year ago today, her eldest son became King it began a period of mourning that was firmly retrospective, with little obvious enthusiasm for what was to follow. Charles III, already well past the state retirement age after spending more than half a century circling in the holding pattern that is being first in line to the throne, could offer none of the youth, promise or glamour of his mother in 1952. If a historical parallel has to be drawn it might be with William IV who succeeded at the age of 64 and ruled for seven now largely forgotten (but constitutionally not insignificant) years before his niece initiated the Victorian era. An elderly footnote monarch, keeping the throne warm for a younger, more exciting successor better suited to rapidly changing times.

King Charles was never going to settle for that, and even at the age of 74 he appears intent on carving out a reign that will be notable for combining a robust world view with a willingness to modernise one of the last great, imperial-scale monarchies on the planet. At the same time the King has used the first year of his reign to signal that he understands the boundaries of the constitutional order.

Those who imagined Charles might bust those boundaries with incendiary pronouncements have been disappointed. He may differ with some government policies but he does not court controversy. Those near to this sensitive, if occasionally petulant, man say his passions can be summed up in three Cs: climate change, culture and community. But when ministers vetoed his attendance at the Cop27 climate summit in Egypt he accepted that curb on his freedom. In any case the King can gain some satisfaction from the fact that causes he was sometimes derided for espousing — greenery, anti-brutalist architecture and organic farming — are part of today's mainstream culture.

Challenges lie ahead. The King is understood to desire a streamlined monarchy in which the bulk of work is performed by himself and his consort, Camilla, who has enjoyed a successful start to her role, and the Prince and Princess of Wales, with subsidiary duties for the Princess Royal and Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh. He should stick with this line-up. There can be no question of the Duke of York re-entering public life, and the Duke and Duchess of Sussex are now beyond the pale.

The King must also be acutely aware of how the continuing opulence of the House of Windsor can jar in an age of seemingly never-ending austerity. There are too many palaces and the bill for monarchy is too high. David Cameron's pegging of the sovereign grant to the profits of the Crown Estate resulted in a surge in royal income — doubling since 2017 — that is positively distasteful. The true cost of monarchy, particularly in regard to security, remains opaque. The Crown Estate formula needs to be junked and replaced by a fixed budget.

The monarchy's relevance in the wider world is also being questioned. Charles can expect to preside over a diminishing constellation of former colonies and dominions. The chilly reception given to William and Kate in Jamaica last year as Britain's involvement in slavery re-emerged as an issue may presage the end of royalty as the binding force in the Commonwealth. Canada, Australia and New Zealand are among members who may well become republics before too long. Monarchy remains a diplomatic asset, however, as successful state visits, like that to Germany this year, show.

The King maintains a 60 per cent approval rating and the majority of Britons support the monarchy as an institution. But, ominously, less than a third of 18 to 24-year-olds are monarchists. As memories of the old Queen fade and with them the last vestiges of deference, the Windsors will have to fight harder for their survival.

Prison Break

An inmate's escape from Wandsworth signals serious problems with Britain's jails

In 1965 Ronnie Biggs, co-conspirator in the Great Train Robbery, escaped from Wandsworth Prison by scaling the facility's wall with an improvised rope ladder and jumping onto the roof of a delivery van. On Wednesday, Daniel Khalife pulled off a similarly daring getaway. The former British soldier, who was being held on remand for offences under the Official Secrets Act, appears to have fled the prison by clinging to the underside of a delivery van. Such an audacious feat could be the stuff of cinematic melodrama were it not an indictment of the dismal standards now widespread in Britain's prison system.

That a prisoner is able to abscond from jail is a worrying sign that prisons are failing to discharge their basic duty to protect the public from criminals and suspected offenders. An independent investigation into security standards at Wandsworth is needed urgently. This was ordered yesterday by Alex Chalk, the justice secretary, along with a wider review to ensure that all of the 1,300 prisoners on the Wandsworth site pose a suitably low risk to merit being housed in the less secure conditions of a category B facility.

It is clear that Mr Khalife, who was due to stand trial in November on charges of planting fake explosives at a military base and collecting information useful to a hostile state, should never have been housed outside a category A prison such as Belmarsh. That he had also been identified as a flight risk makes it all the more astonishing that he was allowed a job in the prison kitchen, a post usually reserved for the most trusted inmates and the location from which he seems to have fled.

It cannot be ruled out that Mr Khalife had help from internal accomplices in escaping; this is for the upcoming inquiry to determine. But whether he acted alone or not, his flight will have been eased by the chaotic conditions at Wandsworth. Last year's report into the facility by His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons, Charlie Taylor, described Wandsworth as a "crumbling, overcrowded, vermin-infested prison". It frequently houses up to 80 per cent more prisoners than it was designed for, and the incidence of violent assault and poor behaviour is high. Mr Khalife's escape will have required the failure of many layers of security. Wandsworth's staffing crisis makes such failures considerably more probable. On any given day up to 44 per cent of staff are unable to perform their duties. Nationally, stress-related absenteeism among prison officers has doubled in five years.

Mr Khalife's breakout has served to highlight a dysfunctional system in which illegal drug and mobile phone use is routinely tolerated to reduce the frustration of inmates locked in their cells for up to 23 hours a day. The government deserves some credit for ensuring that escapes are rare — usually in single figures each year despite a prison population of about 85,000.

However, the overall picture in Britain's prisons is bleak. Living conditions are often inhumane and unsanitary, levels of rehabilitation unsatisfactory, and prison officers are both inexperienced and overstretched following years of cuts. It is all very well talking tough on crime and boasting about repairs to cuts in police numbers. But prisons are an equally critical component of the justice system. An effective penal system maintains public safety not only by incarcerating criminals but also by rehabilitating them in humane conditions.

Clear Horizon

British science's future is brighter after readmission to the EU research programme

Achieving a successful outcome in multinational negotiations is often more a matter of alchemy than of science. Securing Britain's re-entry to Horizon, the European-wide mechanism for funding scientific research, was proof of this. After Britain forfeited its membership of the scheme by quitting the EU, two years of political brinkmanship followed during which the future of this country's research base was thrown into grave doubt. Yesterday, at long last, Britain's researchers got the result they wanted when the government announced their return to a flagship programme worth £82 billion in grants over seven years.

The prime minister should enjoy this eureka moment. Britain's return is largely thanks to the greater maturity Rishi Sunak was able to bring to negotiations, as compared with his two predecessors. Mr Sunak's negotiating of the Windsor Framework on Northern Ireland this year successfully cleared the way for fresh talks on Horizon which the EU had been blocking as a retaliatory measure. Mr Sunak has also shown commendable steel in securing Britain's return on fair financial terms; he has brokered a rebate to make up for the two years when Britain was excluded from the programme and is understood to have finalised a mechanism ensuring that the UK does not pay in more to the system than it gains.

It was always a no-brainer that this country should return to Horizon. Its excellent universities and research institutes mean that it punches well above its weight in global research. But in a scientific landscape dominated by the United States and China this country — often the go-to leader in Horizon projects — needs allies.

The wrangling over Horizon has been a painful episode. Politics and science are not good bedfellows. The aim must now be to make up for lost time and revive frozen relationships.

World

Mexican abortion ruling hailed as a ‘victory for women’

Mexico
Stephen Gibbs
Latin America Correspondent

Campaigners for women’s rights in Mexico have been celebrating dual victories after the country’s Supreme Court agreed to decriminalise abortion on the day it was confirmed that both leading candidates for next year’s presidential election would be female.

In a statement, the court said the abortion section of the federal penal code was unconstitutional and violated the rights of those who could have children, while reinforcing “the gender role that imposes motherhood as a compulsory destiny”.

The decision will require the country’s federal public health service and all federal health institutions to offer abortion to those who request it.

It comes after years of incremental legal moves by the court, which had decriminalised abortion state by state. Eleven of the country’s states, as well as the capital, Mexico City, already permit the procedure in certain circumstances.

Courts in the 20 states that still ban abortion will now have to abide by the Supreme Court’s decision, although campaigners say they will fight to have the law changed in every state.

“Today is a day of victory and justice for Mexican women!” the country’s National Institute for Women wrote in a message on Twitter/X.

Some in the still predominantly Catholic nation expressed their opposition to the ruling. Irma Barrientos, director of the Civil Association for the Rights of the Conceived, said she would continue the fight against expanded abortion access.

“We’re not going to stop,” she said. “Let’s remember what happened in the United States. After 40 years, the [US] Supreme Court reversed its abortion decision, and we’re not going to stop until Mexico guarantees the right to life from the moment of conception.”

Hours before the announcement, in what is being seen as a parallel breakthrough for Mexican women, President López Obrador’s Morena party revealed that Claudia Sheinbaum, a former mayor of Mexico City, had defeated five internal party rivals — all men — to become its candidate in the presidential election next June.

She will face Xóchitl Gálvez, who was named on Sunday as the candidate of a coalition of opposition parties led by the conservative National Action Party, or PAN. Both candidates have placed equal rights as central to their campaign, in a society in which machismo remains deep-rooted.

Gálvez, a technology company owner and politician, who is from an indigenous background, often describes in her speeches her success in confronting domineering men, including her hard-drinking father. “Nobody controls me, not even my husband,” she once said.



Claudia Sheinbaum, a former mayor of Mexico City, and Xóchitl Gálvez, below, are the leading presidential candidates

How a taboo was broken

Analysis

It has been a quiet revolution in Latin America (Stephen Gibbs writes). Seemingly against the odds, in a region that is notorious for its machismo culture and religious conservatism, and where divorce was illegal for most of the 20th century, significant legal breakthroughs have been made on women’s rights.

What is behind this? One explanation has been extremely effective feminist activism. Relatively small groups have proved the power of lobbying political parties and legislative bodies to achieve their demands.

Grassroots organisations, some set up decades ago, have become more visible, in part thanks to social media.

Powerful images of ordinary women protesting in large numbers in favour of legalising abortion had another significant consequence: they broke a taboo. At last, Latin American women could see their sisters publicly discussing an issue which had long been associated with sin.

Some space for change has also been provided by the gradual decline of the Catholic church in Latin America. The percentage of people who identify as Catholic dropped from 70 per cent in 2010 to 57 per cent in 2020.

She has vowed that pushing for equal pay for men and women would be a priority of her government.

The senator has accused López Obrador of machismo after he branded her the “candidate of the power mafia” — his reference to the opposition, which he usually portrays as a white male elite. “Machos like you are afraid of an independent and intelligent woman,” she retorted.

Despite being the conservative candidate, Gálvez has a liberal record on social issues and defends abortion rights.

Sheinbaum describes herself as a feminist. As mayor, she established a telephone line for female victims of violence and supported laws to protect abused women. Ten women and girls are killed every day by relatives or intimate partners, according to government figures. Last year a survey by the National Statistics Office revealed that about half of all Mexican women over 15 had been victims of sexual violence.

López Obrador cannot stand for reelection because the constitution prohibits second terms.

The near certainty that Mexico, which has a population of 128 million, will elect its first female president next year comes at a time of growing influence of women’s rights activists across Latin America. Its most visible impact has been on abortion, with countries lifting restrictions in recent years. The trend has been described as the “green wave”, a reference to the green bandanas worn by campaigners.

Three years ago elective abortions in Latin America were permitted in only three of its smaller countries: Uruguay, Cuba and Guyana. But a wave of legal cases led by activists has led to significant change. In 2020 Argentina allowed abortion during the first 14 weeks of pregnancy. Last year Ecuador decriminalised abortion in cases of rape. Colombia has also legalised abortion during the first 24 weeks of pregnancy, making its laws among the most liberal in the Americas.

Some smaller countries, including El Salvador, Honduras and Dominican Republic, ban abortion under all circumstances, including rape. And the frontrunner in Argentina’s elections next month, Javier Milei, has expressed his personal opposition to the procedure, which he described as “homicidal”. He has pledged to hold a referendum on the subject if elected.

The shift in Latin America’s larger nations is in contrast to that in the United States, where last year the Supreme Court overturned Roe v Wade, the 1973 ruling that provided a right to abortion nationwide.





Moon Sniper gives Japan its best shot at a lunar landing

Japan launched a rocket carrying an unmanned spacecraft nicknamed the “Moon Sniper” yesterday in an attempt to become the fifth nation to land on the moon (Gavin Blair writes).

The H2A rocket lifted off from Tanegashima, an island off the southern tip of Japan, at 8.42am local time and released the Smart Lander for Investigating Moon (Slim) module.

Hiroshi Yamakawa, the head of the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency, said Slim was due to land on the moon in February.

Musk turned off Starlink

Ukraine
Marc Bennetts

Elon Musk told his engineers to switch off a Starlink satellite communications network near the coast of Crimea last year due to fears that a Ukrainian attack on Russia’s naval fleet could trigger a nuclear response from President Putin, a new biography has revealed.

Ukraine has used SpaceX-made Starlink satellite terminals to keep its military forces connected even as Russia has destroyed phone and internet networks. Yet as Ukrainian submarine drones armed with explosives approached the Russian fleet in the Black Sea, they suddenly lost connectivity and “washed ashore harmlessly”, according to Walter Isaacson’s new biography of the eccentric billionaire, entitled *Elon Musk*. An excerpt was published yesterday by CNN.

Musk’s concerns that a strike on the Kremlin’s forces in Crimea could lead to a nuclear attack were heightened after conversations with senior Russian officials, Isaacson wrote. He was also worried that the attack would be seen in Moscow as a “mini-Pearl Harbor”.

The Tesla and SpaceX boss founder refused to reverse his decision even after appeals from Mykhailo Fedorov, a Ukrainian deputy prime minister.

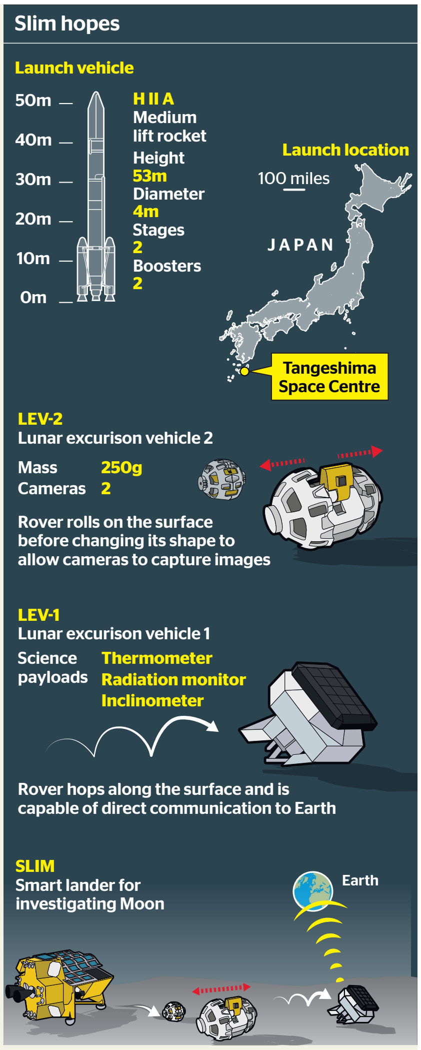
Fedorov is said to have tried to sway Musk by detailing the capabilities of the drones. “I just want you — the person who is changing the world through technology — to know this,” he wrote in a text message. Musk said that while he

US city votes to ditch lenient drugs policy as overdose deaths soar
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German Holocaust memorials defaced 'almost daily'
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KYODO/REUTERS



The Japanese lander that lifted off yesterday aims to arrive within 100 metres of its target

The mission has cost about £80 million — a small sum in space exploration terms — and Japan aims for the module to land within 100 metres of its target site; the aim of previous landings has been within several kilometres.

"The big objective of Slim is … to achieve 'landing where we want' on the lunar surface, rather than 'landing where we can'," Yamakawa said.

Slim is heading for the Shioli crater, near the Mare Nectaris lunar sea close to the equator on the near side of the moon, and will test optical and image-processing technology there.

The global space race is escalating. Last month India's Chandrayaan-3 lander touched down near the moon's unexplored south pole and Russia's Luna 25 crashed on approach attempting the same feat.

The Japanese launch had been due last month but was postponed because of bad weather. Two lunar landing attempts by Japan in the past year have failed: engineers lost contact with the Omotenashi lander and in November scrapped a second attempt, and the Hakuto-R Mission 1 lander, made by the start-up ispace, crashed in April as it made its descent.

satellite 'to prevent Ukrainian attack'

was impressed with the drones, he would not turn the Starlink network back on because he believed that Ukraine was "inviting [Russia's] strategic defeat", according to Isaacson.

Crimea was annexed by Russia from Ukraine in 2014 and western officials are concerned that the Kremlin could resort to nuclear weapons to defend it.

President Zelensky has said there can be no ceasefire until Russian forces have left the Black Sea peninsula.

Musk provided Ukraine with millions of dollars of Starlink satellite terminals after Russia targeted its communications systems before its full-scale invasion last year. The grey terminals have also been used to allow Ukrainians in newly liberated regions to get in touch with relatives. Zelensky uses them to transmit his nightly broadcasts to the nation.

However, as Ukraine began using the Starlink technology to co-ordinate strikes against Russian forces, the businessman had second thoughts about his involvement in the conflict.

"How am I in this war?" Musk asks Isaacson in the biography. "Starlink was not meant to be involved in wars. It was so people can watch Netflix and chill and get online for school and do peaceful things, not drone strikes."

Although Musk's technology has proven essential to Ukraine's resistance, he sparked fury in Kyiv last year when he floated a peace plan that would have left Crimea under the Kremlin's control. In a social media post, Musk suggested holding United Nations-supervised elections in four occupied regions of Ukraine that Moscow has claimed as Russian territory.

Musk said in October that SpaceX was spending $20 million a month to maintain the Starlink system. The company reportedly told the Pentagon that it would be unable to foot the bill any longer. However, Musk had a rethink, tweeting: "The hell with it, we'll just keep funding Ukraine govt for free."

In June the Pentagon said that SpaceX had won a US defence contract to provide Ukraine with satellites. "Satellite communications constitute a vital layer in Ukraine's overall communications network and the department contracts with Starlink for services of this type," the Pentagon said.

Ukrainian drone strikes, page 30

G20 snub raises question marks around erratic Xi

China
Richard Spencer China Correspondent

Rishi Sunak and other world leaders were setting off for India last night to discuss Ukraine, climate change and the world economy.

The G20's pivotal figure, however, was visiting flood-hit residents of Dragon King Temple village in China's far northeast.

President Xi's obvious snub to other global power-brokers has raised further questions about his decision not to attend the G20 summit in Delhi, part of a recent pattern of behaviour that has puzzled diplomats.

India has denied that it is offended by China's decision to send Li Qiang, the prime minister, in Xi's place. The two countries have poor relations over border disputes in the Himalayas and because of India's growing closeness to the United States. That has not prevented previous meetings, but Indian media have noted that Xi has yet to send a congratulatory message to Narendra Modi, the host prime minister.

"At the end of the day, countries are represented by whoever they have chosen to represent them," Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, the Indian foreign minister, said. "The levels of representation do not become the final determinant of the position of a country."

A more likely object of the snub is President Biden. Xi has made it his personal mission to challenge America's use of global bodies to criticise China's policies, and is particularly sensitive to accusations that he is too supportive of Russia's war in Ukraine.

President Putin is also not attending the summit, but since he is facing an arrest warrant from the International Criminal Court for war crimes, his absence was expected, even though India is not a member of the court.

The Chinese state apparatus, which has given no formal explanation for Xi's absence, has dropped strong hints that if a snub were directed against anyone in particular, it would be Biden. A social media post by the all-powerful state security ministry this week admonished America for continuing to try to "contain" China and hinted that if relations did not improve Xi might also refuse to go to a summit of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation group of nations in San Francisco in November.

However, as is common in China's opaque politics, Xi's unusual avoidance of the limelight — he is the most personally assertive Chinese leader since Chairman Mao, who died in 1976 — has set off a rash of speculation.

On his last overseas visit, to a meeting of the Brics countries in South Africa, a group based around the once-rising economies of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, he failed to turn up to the key event at which he was due to deliver a speech. Instead it was read out for him by the commerce minister, amid rumours that a Chinese nuclear submarine had sunk in the Taiwan Strait. Taiwan said it had noticed no such event.

On this occasion, a report from the normally well-sourced Japanese Nikkei news agency said Xi was facing less dramatic but also serious internal problems. A series of financial disasters, including the collapse of a big property company, the near-collapse of a second, and rising youth unemployment, had earned him a rare rebuke from an informal annual gathering of Communist Party elders.

According to Nikkei, the former vice-president Zeng Qinghong, 84, a key aide to the late President Jiang, read Xi the riot act about the economy and the general sense of "domestic turmoil" at the annual summer leadership gathering at Beidaihe, a seaside resort.

Xi is said to have vented his annoyance at the rebuke to his leadership team, blaming China's problems on unsolved issues left over from the time of Jiang, Jiang's predecessor as paramount leader Deng Xiaoping, and Xi's immediate predecessor, Hu Jintao.

In truth, while China's economy has performed more poorly than expected this year, few see it triggering imminent threats to Xi's dominance of Chinese politics. Figures released yesterday showed a decline last month in China's massive trade surplus — but only to $68 billion, from $79 billion in August last year.

Some analysts suggest that Xi's absence is merely an indication that he regards the answers to China's problems as lying in China — and that he does not wish to be lectured by western leaders at international summits.

On his visit to the northeast, he also showed that he was not intending to change the country's political course. In Dragon King Temple village, he consoled residents whose houses had been damaged and fields flooded by Typhoon Doksuri in July. "In China, when people encounter difficulties, we still need to give full play to the superiority of our socialism," he told them, according to state media. "That is, when one party is in trouble, all parties will support it, and the country will fully support it."



President Xi has faced criticism from officials

US city votes to ditch lenient drugs policy as overdoses soar

United States
Keiran Southern Los Angeles

Portland has voted to ban the open use of hard drugs on public property in an attempt to tackle a surge in overdose deaths.

Oregon, one of the most progressive states in America, decriminalised possession of small amounts of drugs in 2020, including crystal meth, fentanyl and cocaine, on the grounds that it would remove the stigma from addiction and ultimately save lives.

However, the experiment has had a troubled start, with parts of the state's biggest city, Portland, filled with rows of tents home to rampant drug use.

Overdose deaths have soared as a result, with a record 209 fatalities from fentanyl last year in Multnomah County, which includes Portland, according to a local newspaper, The Oregonian.

Portland city council is now trying to restrict open drug use and on Wednesday it approved an emergency ordinance that extends the existing ban on public alcohol use to include controlled substances. However, Oregon law prohibits local authorities from regulating the consumption of street drugs, placing that authority with the state. Therefore, statewide rule changes are needed for the city's restrictions to be enforced.

Ted Wheeler, the mayor of Portland, said: "The bottom line is this: week by week, the situation is getting worse. We have to focus with urgency to save lives and livelihoods."

Rene Gonzalez, Portland city's commissioner of public safety, said: "These are necessary, commonsense steps to disrupt debilitating drug use on the streets of Portland that does deep damage to our city's liveability, overwhelms our emergency response system and destroys lives."

Oregon's experiment with decriminalising hard drugs has been closely watched by other states, particularly those in the west of the country that are grappling with high overdose deaths and scenes of lawlessness and despair on city streets. Measure 110, approved by almost 60 per cent of Oregon voters in November 2020, took effect in February 2021.

It meant that those with small amounts of drugs such as crystal meth or fentanyl, a powerful synthetic opioid, were fined $100, a punishment that could be waived if the user agreed to call a drug treatment hotline.

The measure has resulted in more than $265 million — partly funded by Oregon's cannabis tax revenue — going towards recovery programmes as well as paying for clean needles and test strips.

Supporters say the war on drugs has had decades to prove its effectiveness but has decisively failed, while so-called harm reduction techniques — which shift the focus from law and order — will save lives. However, the hotline appears to have had little impact.

The Economist reported that of the 4,000 drug use citations issued in Oregon during the first two years of Measure 110, only 40 people called the referral number to say they were interested in treatment. The hotline is said to have cost taxpayers $7,000 a call.

Multnomah County's homeless population grew by 29 per cent in the year to January, according to official figures.

Oregonians also appear to have soured on the laws. A poll last month indicated that 56 per cent of respondents in the state supported a total repeal of Measure 110, with 64 per cent saying they would support repealing parts of the law.

Not everyone is ready to give up on Measure 110, with some speakers at Wednesday's meeting condemning the latest ordinance. "This prohibition specifically targets substance users without sufficient private property to use legally," Lauren Armony, a director at the social services non-profit organisation Sisters of the Road, said. "It will marginalise substance users into unregulated and unsafe environments."

OUZOUNOVA/SPLASH NEWS



Brief appearance Lila Moss and Iris Law, newly signed as Victoria's Secret models, at a show by the lingerie firm in New York

'Asteroid autumn' to be season of discovery

Jacqui Goddard Miami

Nasa is preparing for an "asteroid autumn" with three projects in less than six weeks which could provide new clues to the origins of life on Earth.

On September 24 the agency will begin testing fragments of the asteroid Bennu in Utah's western desert in the hope of finding out more about its role in delivering the organic molecules that formed the "chemical recipe" for life billions of years ago. The 250g (8.8oz) fragment is thought to contain particles that pre-date the solar system.

Next, on October 5, Nasa will dispatch a $1.2 billion mission to the asteroid Psyche, the biggest metallic object in the solar system, in orbit between Mars and Jupiter. Believed to be a remnant of a former planet's core, it contains gold, nickel and iron estimated to be worth ten quadrillion dollars — not that it could ever be put up for sale.

On November 1 Nasa's spacecraft Lucy, launched in 2021, will fly near Dinkinesh, a 1km-wide rock in the main asteroid belt, as it gets ready to observe Jupiter's Trojan asteroids.

Lori Glaze, the director of Nasa's planetary science division, said: "Each of those asteroids is a remnant of the earliest building blocks that made up all the planets and moons, so by studying these small bodies we can learn about the origin and evolution of our solar system as well as the actual processes that are still at work today."

DeSantis donors switch to Republican rivals

Hugh Tomlinson Washington

Republican donors who backed Ron DeSantis in the hope that he could topple Donald Trump are diverting their funds to other candidates.

A Politico analysis of the biggest donors to the Florida governor's campaign last year, when he won a second term and was hailed as a rising star, found that many now backed his rivals in the Republican primary race or stopped donating.

DeSantis trails Trump by about 40 points in the polls and is fighting to hold on to second place. Bruce Rauner, the former governor of Illinois, is among those who supported DeSantis last year but has backed Nikki Haley, the former UN ambassador, in the primary race.

Haley, who performed strongly in the Republican television debate two weeks ago, has attracted support from the moderate wing of the party.

Rauner, who made millions in private equity, told Politico that DeSantis had done "a terrific job as governor" but Haley "probably has the best chance to win the general election".

Haley remains a distant fourth in the polls, however. The FiveThirtyEight polling average shows Trump retaining a commanding lead on 53 per cent. DeSantis trails in second on 15 per cent, with Vivek Ramaswamy on 8.7 per cent and Haley on 6 per cent.

The DeSantis campaign remains flush with cash. His fundraising committee had almost $97 million at the end of June, the most of any Republican candidate, including Trump, whose campaign reported $31 million in funds.

"Ron DeSantis outraised both Biden and Trump last quarter," Andrew Romeo, a DeSantis campaign spokesman, said. "We continue to see enthusiasm from grassroots."

Much of his war chest was left over from his campaign to be re-elected as governor. His presidential bid has been overshadowed by reports of unrest among donors and staffing cuts.

Trump has delighted in DeSantis's slump. The candidate once regarded as his strongest rival has fallen consistently in the polls since officially launching his campaign in May.

The former president tried to start a rumour last week that the governor was poised to pull out of the presidential race and run for the Senate, a claim that was denied by the DeSantis campaign.

Other Republican rivals are struggling, including Mike Pence, the former vice-president, who said Trump's populism was a "road to ruin".

Poorly Springsteen forced to postpone more shows

Joshua Thurston

Bruce Springsteen has extended a break from touring and postponed more shows, citing doctors' orders.

The veteran rock star, 73, announced on his website that he had cancelled concerts with his E Street Band in the US this month while he is treated for symptoms of peptic ulcer disease. The illness causes ulcers in the stomach or small intestine and can lead to heartburn, nausea and stomach pain.

"Over here on E Street, we're heartbroken to have to postpone these shows," Springsteen said. "We'll be back to pick up these shows and then some."

Springsteen, whose 74th birthday is on September 23, is renowned for high-energy, three-hour concerts. In March he was forced to postpone shows in Albany, Connecticut and Columbus, Ohio, because of illness, but recovered to play a series of dates over the summer, including in Edinburgh, Birmingham and Hyde Park, central London.



Springsteen, 73, has been treated for peptic ulcers

Last month he postponed his concerts in Philadelphia hours before he was due to go on stage.

Macron rules out Russian flags at Olympics but not the country's athletes

France

Charles Bremner Paris

Russian flags will not be allowed to fly at next summer's Paris Olympic Games and individual Russian athletes should compete only under certain conditions, President Macron has said.

Although a final decision has not yet been taken by the International Olympic Committee (IOC), the French president said world opinion was clear. "Of course, there can be no Russian flag during the Paris Games," he said. "I think there is a consensus on that because Russia, as a country, is not welcome at a time when it has committed war crimes and deported children," he told the sports newspaper L'Équipe. "The real question the Olympic organisation should decide is what place can be given to Russian athletes … It is an issue that should not be politicised."

Because of Russia's invasion, the IOC is expected to extend the four-year ban on its participation in international sports that was imposed in 2019 over doping scandals. The IOC has, however, recommended allowing athletes from Russia and Belarus to compete as neutrals, provided they have not publicly supported the invasion.

Macron said the IOC would "have to decide what place to give to these Russian athletes who sometimes have prepared for a lifetime, and can also be the victims of this regime".

Ukraine should be consulted on the conditions applied to any Russian participation, he added. "This is the balancing act that we will have to carry out."

Ukraine has barred its athletes from competing with Russians and is threatening to boycott Paris if any take part. The policy has been criticised in Ukraine because it could deprive athletes of a place in global sport.

However, Moscow is laying the groundwork to announce its own boycott of the Games on the grounds of supposed western-led anti-Russian hostility that is punishing its athletes. Russian commentators are comparing the situation to 1984, when the Soviet Union boycotted the Los Angeles Olympics, supposedly because their security could not be guaranteed. That was in retaliation for the US-led boycott of the 1980 Moscow Olympics over the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

To counter its sporting banishment, Russia has created alternative competitions such as the Friendship Games and the Brics — Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa — Games.

Port vineyards sound a red alert

Antiquated regulations dating back to Salazar threaten a jewel in the world of wine, writes **Isambard Wilkinson**

ALAMY; SYMINGTON FAMILY ESTATES



The Douro vineyards are popular with tourists, but Paul Symington, the head of his family, left, said the region was at risk



The high, terraced vineyards of the Douro valley attracted record numbers of tourists this summer. Spared heatwaves and storms that devastated crops elsewhere, the northern Portuguese region's bumper grape harvest is raising hopes for a vintage year.

Yet all is not well in the heart of port country. Paul Symington, the head of the Anglo-Portuguese port dynasty, is leading the area's foremost producers in a rebellion against century-old regulations that they say are endangering the Douro valley and its vineyards.

Symington said that for a decade he and others had tried quietly to persuade Lisbon that the regulatory system was choking one of the country's most emblematic businesses. Inflation has pushed the valley's farmers to the brink, prompting the usually discreet port and wine producers to go public with their demand for reform.

A group of 26 producers from the valley, including Sogrape and Gran Cruz, has published a full-page open letter in two national newspapers condemning the lack of government reform, saying it had "impacted not only the price of grapes but also the socio-economic sustainability of the farmers, the companies and the future of the region's wines in international markets." It added: "No wine region can survive such an imbalance for long, suffering damage to its reputation and to the economy of its communities. This incomprehensible inaction is damaging one of the most historic and beautiful wine regions."

The controversy became a national issue on Saturday when the conservative President Rebelo de Sousa called on the Socialist government of António Costa, the prime minister, to reform the system. "This is in our interest and that of Portugal," he said, adding that more than a thousand people had put their names to the producers' letter backing reform. Symington said that the Douro valley was the only wine region in Portugal run along lines set by the dictator António Salazar. "The government has a diamond," he added. "And they're endangering it."

Another wine producer said: "The government is stubborn, stupid or lazy or simply not willing to change." The regulatory system was designed almost exclusively for port but wines now account for almost half the area's grape production. "This has given rise to numerous distortions," Symington said.

"For example, the quantity of grapes that can be made into port is adjusted annually depending on total stocks and demand — just like champagne.

"But Douro wine, from the same vineyards, has no annual quota so these grapes are sold at market prices, which are overwhelmingly below cost every year due to an excess supply."

The effect on farmers is crippling. The port quota is shrinking every year as sales have shifted from volume to premium qualities owing to demand.

"Some say ultimately market forces will work," Symington said. "But the problem is that villages will be increasingly abandoned. We need to manage our region better than others and we are managing it worse than others."

The summer influx of wine tourists has been bittersweet. "The tourists come because of the beautifully tended, terraced vineyards," Symington said. "But the tourism depends on people caring for those vines, farmers who are on their uppers."

'Surge in anti-French rhetoric' after schools ban Muslim dress

Charles Bremner

The security services in France have alerted the government to a rise in anti-French rhetoric on social and traditional media after schools began prohibiting teenage pupils from wearing Muslim robes.

Many of the attacks on the French state's "oppression of Muslims" originated from Turkey, according to the interior ministry's intelligence branch, after a ban on the abaya, a long, full-body tunic, took effect. A significant proportion appeared to be driven by the International Organisation to Support the Prophet of Islam, a group based in Istanbul that is closely associated with the radical Muslim Brotherhood, according to the report leaked to Le Parisien newspaper.

The Turkish English-language television channel TRT World has broadcast attacks on France's "state Islamophobia", including a false claim that 12 per cent of women in France have been raped, the report said.

France and Turkey have been at loggerheads for years. Two years ago President Erdogan of Turkey said he had doubts about President Macron's mental health. Paris is especially concerned about Ankara's backing for fundamentalist Muslim organisations in France.

This week Muslims and left-wing opponents in France and abroad have criticised Macron for saying the abaya ban was a consequence of the beheading of Samuel Paty, a teacher, by an Islamist terrorist in 2020.

Macron said the abaya was being used by Islamists to challenge the French system and its exclusion of religion from state activities.



The ban has gone smoothly, according to the education ministry: nearly 300 girls turned up at school in abayas and 67 were sent home on Tuesday for refusing to change.

A High Court challenge by Muslim Rights Action, an anti-discrimination group, was rejected yesterday.

The ban has won wide public support and the backing of the head teachers' union but two high schools in the suburbs of Paris went on strike on Wednesday, accusing Macron of "stigmatising" Muslim girls and trying to divert attention from a shortage of teachers.

Russia hit by wave of Ukrainian air strikes

Russia was hit by a wave of drones yesterday after Kyiv said a missile had killed at least 17 people in the Donetsk region (Marc Bennetts writes).

One person was injured and three buildings were damaged in Rostov-on-Don, said Russian state media. A drone was reported to have crashed near army headquarters. Video footage showed an explosion lighting up the sky as firefighters tried to put out a blaze.

Sergey Sobyanin, the mayor of Moscow, said air defence systems brought down a drone near the city. It was believed to have come down near Zhukovsky international airport, shattering windows in houses near by.

Drones were also shot down in the Bryansk region near Belarus.

Moscow has become a target recently. Kyiv said the attacks were to bring the war closer to Russians. Oleksiy Danilov, the head of Ukraine's security council, told the RFE/RL website: "Why should Russians feel safe in their homes in … Moscow, from where these madmen made the decision to attack our country? Not only our children must suffer. Let [Russians] suffer the same way. Let them see what war is."

A suspected Russian missile killed at least 17 people when it hit Kostyantynivka, a town in eastern Ukraine, on Wednesday as Antony Blinken, the American secretary of state, was in Kyiv on a trip affirming Washington's support.





EAST2WEST NEWS

An explosion illuminates the night sky above Rostov-on-Don and firefighters and troops arrive to clear up the wreckage after drone strikes by Ukraine



The tour is the perfect introduction to Vietnam, with cultural activities and plenty of opportunities to interact with the locals. Learn more about the Vietnam War in and around Saigon, and explore Hue for a glimpse of a magnificent imperial past. Hoi An will charm you with its cobble streets and scenic riverside setting, whilst capital city Hanoi boasts timeless streets full of local life, charming colonial architecture and a fascinating history to discover. The tour finishes as it started, with a showstopper – Halong Bay, where you'll take an overnight cruise out onto the calm waters and wend your way through the breathtaking karst scenery.

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Holocaust memorials defaced with swastikas 'almost daily'

Germany
David Crossland Berlin

Concentration camp memorial sites are being defaced with swastikas and other antisemitic graffiti on an almost daily basis as the rise of the hard right in Germany emboldens extremists, the director of Buchenwald said.

Jens-Christian Wagner, who heads the memorial at the former concentration camp near Weimar, said Germany was undergoing a shift in attitudes towards its Nazi history and that attacks were becoming more frequent. Antisemitism, conspiracy theories and the ideology of so-called reich citizens, bent on dismantling the postwar state and restoring the borders of the German empire, were on the rise, Wagner said.

"This can basically be summed up in three letters: AfD," he told the public broadcaster ARD. "It unites precisely these currents in its ranks, which gives the emerging right-wing extremists the tailwind to openly turn against memorials and the culture of remembrance. In this social climate, violent attacks on memorial work are taking place."

Buchenwald, where more than 56,000 Jews, political opponents, Roma and others were killed, reported a swastika being spray-painted on its car park this week. Ten days ago a visitor yelled that the Holocaust was a Zionist fabrication and trees marking the route of a death march were damaged, as they had been last year.

In Weimar posters advertising guided tours of the site had the words "Jews lie" daubed on them. "It used to happen once a month, then once every two weeks and now it's every week," Rikola-Gunnar Lüttgenau, a Buchenwald spokesman, said.

"There's a climate in which it's become acceptable again to say that one doesn't respect the human rights of everyone and to elevate oneself above others. People are identifying with those who espoused this approach most strongly in German history, who trampled on the human rights of others. They're identifying with National Socialists."

Support for the AfD has doubled over the past year, putting the party in second place nationally at 20 per cent behind the Christian Democrats and ahead of the Social Democrats and Greens. In the eastern states of Saxony, Thuringia and Brandenburg, it is polling in first place, with elections due there next year.

It won its first district council election in June and the AfD candidate Jörg Prophet is standing in a mayoral election in Nordhausen, home to the Mittelbau-Dora camp memorial, on Sunday, prompting a statement of concern by the Bergen-Belsen survivors' organisation in Israel this week.

Many Bergen-Belsen survivors came from Mittelbau-Dora, and the organisation said an AfD victory would be a disaster for the memorial, adding: "If he is elected mayor, it would be unthinkable to allow Jörg Prophet to participate in events at the Mittelbau-Dora memorial site."

China plans to ban 'hurtful' clothing

China
Richard Spencer China Correspondent

Communist Party officials in China have proposed a law banning clothes that might "hurt the feelings of the people", prompting widespread public complaints that infringements on personal liberties are going too far.

The proposed legislation from the standing committee of the country's parliament, the National People's Congress, did not spell out a definition of what form the offending dress might take.

That has been enough to provoke criticism both from legal experts and ordinary citizens, who say it could be abused by police. In recent years the party has discouraged a range of



Rainbow clothing associated with gay rights is already discouraged

"offensive" clothing — most prominently, rainbow T-shirts associated with LGBT activism. Young people in rainbow outfits at pop concerts have been ordered to remove them.

Another notable case was the arrest of a woman in the city of Suzhou last year for wearing a kimono — hostility to Japan is the nearest thing modern China has to a universal religious belief system.

Clothes with overt messages critical of the Communist Party are not tolerated under existing laws, in line with longstanding restrictions on free speech.

The new law would extend the definition of what would be regarded as illegal. It would ban behaviour including "dress or speech" that is "detrimental to the spirit of the Chinese people and hurt the feelings of the Chinese people".

Offenders would face up to ten days in prison or fines of 3,000 yuan (£330).

Business

WORLD MARKETS (Change on the day)

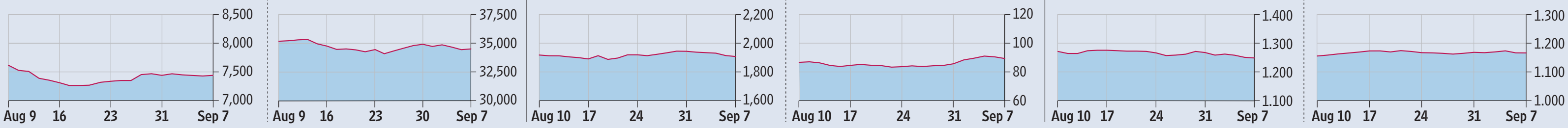
FTSE 100 7,441.72 (+15.58) ▲ | Dow Jones 34,500.73 (+57.54) ▲

COMMODITIES

Gold $1,919.96 (-2.27) ▼ | Brent crude $89.53 (-1.02) ▼

CURRENCIES

£/$ $1.2485 (-0.0014) ▼ | £/€ €1.1664 (+0.0005) ▲



Smurfit merger with US rival threatens another blow to London

Callum Jones

The FTSE 100 looks set to lose another company to New York after Smurfit Kappa said it was in advanced talks to merge with an American rival, creating a group worth almost $20 billion.

The Irish paper and packaging company plans to combine with WestRock, a Georgia-based operator, and shift its primary listing to the United States.

Smurfit Kappa, one of the world's largest suppliers of paper-based packaging, said there was no certainty that the deal would be sealed but both companies were in the midst of conducting "mutual due diligence".

It plans to ditch its premium listing in London and delist altogether from Euronext Dublin. Smurfit WestRock would keep a standard listing in the City but this would draw a line under Smurfit Kappa's seven years on the FTSE 100.

It is the latest blow to the London Stock Exchange, which has suffered a number of high-profile defections to the US in recent years. The British chip designer Arm is poised to go public in the US within days after deciding against a return to the London market.

The New York Stock Exchange, which is determined to lure more companies to Wall Street, advertised for a London-based executive to "cultivate important relationships". It argues that companies are better valued there but analysts questioned whether Smurfit WestRock would gain such a boost.

Smurfit Kappa did not respond to requests for comment beyond its statement, which did not disclose the financial terms of the proposed deal. Shareholders in WestRock are to primarily receive shares in the combined group, it said. Any finalised agreement would be subject to shareholder approval and regulatory approval.

Smurfit WestRock would be the world's "go-to" packaging supplier, according to Smurfit Kappa, with annual revenue of $34 billion, adjusted earnings of $5.5 billion and about 100,000 employees across 42 markets. It would be headquartered in Dublin, with an American base in Atlanta, Georgia.

WestRock is valued at $8.51 billion (£6.82 billion) in New York. Shares in Smurfit Kappa dropped 3.8 per cent, or £1.22p, to £31 in London, giving an indicative value of about £8.1 billion.

House prices fall at fastest since 2009

Buyers 'push decisions down road' after rate rises

Tom Howard

House prices are falling at their fastest rate since the financial crisis and have hit their lowest level in real terms since 2016 as high interest rates subdue the property market.

Prices dropped 4.6 per cent in the year to September, according to the latest index from Halifax, marking the steepest annual drop recorded by the mortgage lender since the summer of 2009. The average house price fell by 1.9 per cent in August — the largest one-month decrease since November last year when the housing market was suffering aftershocks from Liz Truss and Kwasi Kwarteng's mini-budget.

The decline is considerably more dramatic than both the 0.3 per cent dip that had been forecast by economists and the 0.4 per cent fall in July. A typical house in Britain now costs £279,569, which is £14,000 below the peak in September last year.

Analysts at Capital Economics calculated that, once inflation was accounted for, prices were back to where they were in 2016. "In other words, the rise in house prices since the beginning of the pandemic is no longer exceptional," they said. "The value of homes has increased by slightly less than the general price level."

On Halifax's measure, prices have fallen for five consecutive months.

Kim Kinnaird, the lender's director of mortgages, said: "Market activity levels slowed during August, and while there is always a seasonality effect at this time of year, it also isn't surprising given the pace of mortgage rate increases over June and July. This may well have prompted prospective buyers to defer transactions in the hope of some stability and greater clarity on the direction of rates in the coming months."

David Thomas, chief executive of Barratt Developments, one of Britain's biggest housebuilders, said would-be buyers, especially those joining the housing ladder, were "pushing their decisions down the road".

The mini-budget last September caused chaos in the bond markets and led to a rapid rise in borrowing costs, including mortgages. Developers and estate agents reported an immediate drop in demand. Prices are falling in every region, but in the southeast of England, where homes are most expense, they are under the most pressure, down 5 per cent over the past 12 months. In Scotland, by contrast, prices are 0.6 per cent lower.

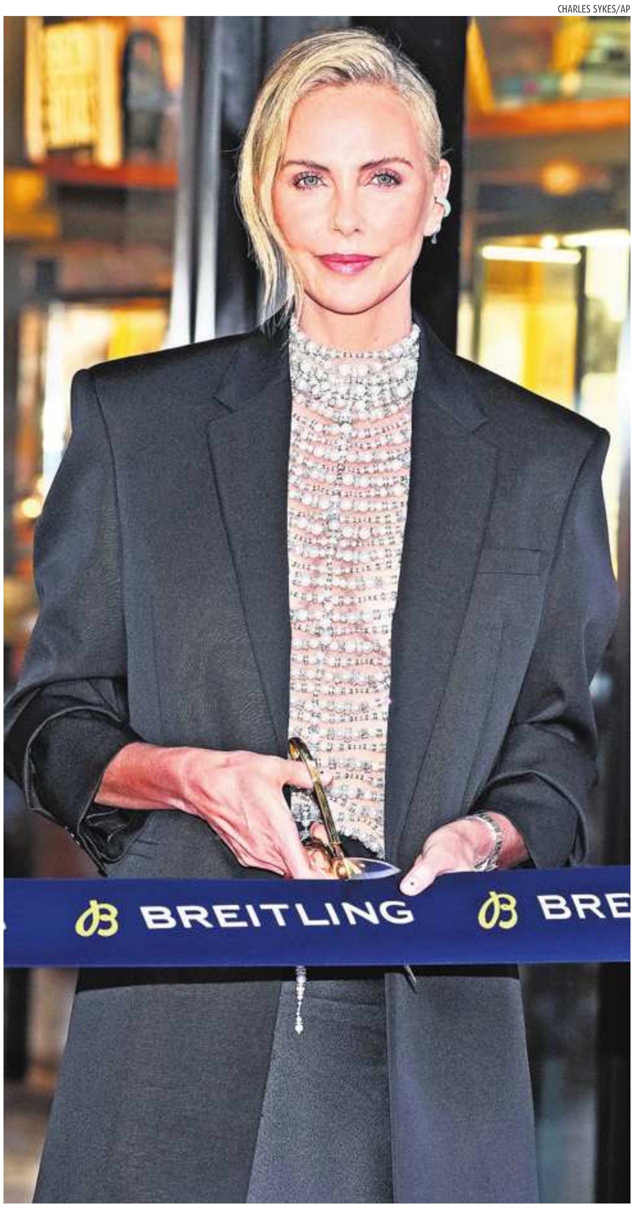
Kinnaird said that she expected "further downward pressure on property prices", which reflects the view of economists. Prices have fallen by about 5 per cent from their peak last September and Imogen Pattison, assistant economist at Capital Economics, thinks they are likely to fall by another 5.5 per cent.

"High mortgage rates will mean demand remains very weak while previously tight supply of second-hand homes on the market is easing," Pattison said. "As a result, we anticipate house prices to continue to drop until mid-2024."

The falls have helped to improve house price affordability. The house price-to-income ratio for first-time buyers has dropped from a peak of 5.8 times last summer to 5.1 times — the most affordable level since June 2020.

Why lenders are forcing prices down, Bricks & Mortar

CHARLES SYKES/AP



Breit spark Charlize Theron, the Oscar-winning actress, cuts the ribbon at the luxury watchmaker Breitling's new store in New York's Meatpacking district

Deloitte still the biggest of Big Four

Tom Howard

Deloitte has cemented its position as the biggest of the Big Four accounting firms by winning business advising on climate change and cybersecurity risks even as its financial advisory services suffered amid a dearth of takeovers.

The group's global revenue in its latest financial year, which ran until the end of May, rose 14.9 per cent to $64.9 billion, a fresh record and higher than its rivals EY, KPMG and PwC.

Deloitte can trace its roots back to an accountants set up by William Welch Deloitte in London in 1845, but more than half of its revenue now comes from the Americas. It employs 457,000 people around the world, about 600 of whom are UK-based equity partners.

Consulting, Deloitte's largest global business, remained its fastest-growing, with revenues climbing by 19.1 per cent to $29.6 billion. While companies are not investing in technology quite as heavily as they were during the pandemic, they are still upgrading their IT systems, Deloitte said.

Demand for its audit and assurance teams also picked up. Revenues increased by 13.8 per cent to $12.3 billion.

Deloitte's risk advisory offering, which includes climate change advice and cybersecurity management, grew 17.5 per cent to $7.8 billion. Its tax and legal division generated $10.3 billion, a 9.1 per cent year-on-year increase.

Given the dearth of mergers and acquisitions and with few companies listing on stock markets, Deloitte's financial advisory practice increased its revenues by just 4.7 per cent to $5.1 billion, markedly below the 20 per cent-plus growth of the previous year.

Deloitte is the first of the four to have reported full results for its latest financial year. EY has already said that its revenues grew by just over 14 per cent in its most recent financial year, which ended in June, to close to $50 billion, although its results will not be published until later this month. PwC's numbers are due in October and KPMG nearer the end of the year.

Need to know

1 Rises in the state pension will cost taxpayers up to £45 billion a year by 2050, a think tank said, adding pressure on ministers to increase the official retirement age. The Treasury is preparing to increase pensions by more than 8 per cent next year after a 10.1 per cent rise this year because of the so-called "triple lock". Page 2

2 New rights for Indian students and workers in Britain are being demanded by Narendra Modi, the prime minister of India, before a meeting with Rishi Sunak. The two leaders are expected to discuss a free trade deal in talks before the G20 summit. The deal is expected to give opportunities to UK services companies. Page 8

3 House prices are falling at their fastest rate since the financial crisis and have hit their lowest level in real terms since 2016 as high interest rates subdue the market. Prices dropped 4.6 per cent in the year to September, Halifax said. Page 31

4 The FTSE 100 looks set to lose another company to New York after Smurfit Kappa said it was in advanced talks to merge with an American rival, creating a group worth almost $20 billion. The Irish paper and packaging company plans to combine with WestRock, a Georgia-based operator. Page 31

5 In one of the greatest comebacks in the history of the British motor industry, a van has rolled off the assembly line at Vauxhall's Ellesmere Port factory in Cheshire, which shut down two years ago. The site is Britain's first all-electric vehicle manufacturing plant.

6 More than £500 million was wiped off the stock market value of CVS Group, the vet network, after regulators initiated a review. The Competition and Markets Authority is concerned about consolidation in the sector, which serves the 17 million British households with pets and is worth about £2 billion a year.

7 The eurozone could slip back into recession as new data signalled a sharper slowdown in economic growth than first thought. Eurostat said GDP expanded by 0.1 per cent in the three months to June, largely as a result of a slump in German manufacturing. Page 34

8 Britain's jobs market is finally showing signs of cooling, with hiring down and wage growth slowing, easing pressure on the Bank of England to press ahead with interest rates rises. Page 34

9 British American Tobacco has agreed to sell its Russian and Belarusian business 18 months after promising to do so following Moscow's invasion of Ukraine. Page 35

10 The cost of storm Idalia will be "quite modest" for Lloyd's of London, its chief executive said as he reported a swing back to first-half profits for the insurance market. John Neal said the industry-wide cost of the hurricane that blasted through Florida and Georgia might be $5 billion to $6 billion but "quite incidental" for Lloyd's. Page 39

Electric era jolts shuttered van factory back to life

After taxpayers helped to resurrect Ellesmere Port, will Vauxhall's Luton plant be next? **Robert Lea** reports



The government is thought to have contributed £30 million to the refit of Ellesmere

It is one of the greatest comebacks in the history of the British motor industry. Yesterday morning the first Vauxhall Combo Electric van rolled off the assembly line of the sprawling Ellesmere Port factory in Cheshire, the plant that 60 years ago gave the nation the best-selling Vauxhall Viva and for four decades from the 1980s was the self-proclaimed Home of the Astra.

Back in production after a two-year shutdown, Ellesmere Port has made history: it is Britain's first all-electric vehicle manufacturing plant. It is also the first all-electric plant anywhere in the world for global giant Stellantis, the renamed Peugeot-Citroën French group whose marques after a bout of mergers and rescues include Vauxhall and its old German sister brand Opel, as well as Italy's Fiat.

The resurrection of Ellesmere Port, however, raises immediate questions over another historic Vauxhall van factory, its plant at Luton, the home of the Vauxhall Vivaro, and whether ministers will step in, as they did in Cheshire, to secure an all-electric future.

The emergence of Ellesmere Port as a symbol of Britain's attempts to keep up in the electrification of the automotive industry comes after a decade on death row. During the recession that followed the global financial crisis, its then owner, General Motors (GM) of the US, was within hours of pulling the plug before striking a deal with the workforce to cut pay and conditions. Even then uncertainties dogged the plant, first around the future in a post-Brexit world, and then its sale as part of GM's withdrawal from Europe in a nominal €1 deal with Peugeot Citroën.

The Astra is long gone but Ellesmere Port is now producing small electric vans, the Vauxhall Combo Electric as well as the Peugeot e-Partner, the Citroën e-Berlingo and the Fiat e-Doblo. They are all essentially the same van with different finishes for different consumers in different markets.

From next year, passenger versions of those vans, people carriers badged Vauxhall Combo Life Electric and Peugeot e-Rifter, will also go into production aimed at larger families and the wheelchair-accessible market.

A shadow of the former heydays of the Viva and the Astra, the operational part of Ellesmere Port now takes up just a third of the plant compared with previously. The workforce stands at 1,000, all kept on and retrained during the run-off of the Astra and the transition to an all-electric plant. On two shifts they will be producing 50,000 vehicles a year, a fraction of the volumes in the 1970s but with the potential to add a third daily shift.

That the Ellesmere Port plant is back in production at all may come as a surprise after Stellantis's global chief executive, the enigmatic Carlos Tavares, said bluntly that Brexit was a disaster and had led his board to completely reassess the group's interests in the UK.

At the official reopening of production at Ellesmere Port, James Taylor, managing director of Vauxhall, indicated the decision to keep going was pragmatic. "Vauxhall has a 30 per cent share of the electric commercial vehicle market in the UK, a figure that goes up to 50 per cent if you include all the Stellantis brands," he said. "Demand is strong and we need to keep up," The models coming out of Ellesmere Port are all made at the Stellantis factory at Vigo in Spain.

Brexit brings wrinkles, however. The battery cells for Ellesmere Port vans are from China. Rules of origin on car components are part of a trade and cooperation agreement between the UK and the EU and mean that Ellesmere Port vans for export to Europe could attract cross-border tariffs, making them 10 per cent more expensive. Ellesmere Port won't get its own gigafactory but will depend on EU-based battery cell plants being developed by Stellantis.

The focus now moves on to Luton. Any van driver acquiring an electric Vivaro — and there are big fleet operators of the zero-emission vehicles like BT and British Gas — will know that they are not buying British, as the vans are assembled in France. To date Luton

Competition review leaves vet group looking poorly

Max Kendix

More than £500 million was wiped off the stock market value of a big veterinary company after regulators initiated a wide-ranging review of the sector.

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) is increasingly concerned about consolidation in the sector, which serves the 17 million British households with pets and is worth about £2 billion a year.

The watchdog has launched several investigations into the sector, most recently warning Medivet over a number of practice acquisitions, but the latest move casts a far wider net.

The CMA has called for pet owners and vet practitioners to write in with their experiences of pricing, how prescriptions are sold, choosing a surgery, and use of out-of-hours services.

The news triggered the share price of CVS Group, the vet network, to drop by more than a third in morning trading, wiping more than half a billion pounds of the company's value.

The company later issued a response to the review, saying: "There continues to be a significant shortage of vets in the UK and employment costs represent the most significant proportion of our cost base. Our pricing reflects this and other inflationary pressures experienced in recent years.

"We have a clear strategy to continue to expand our network and to improve clinical care through investment in facilities, equipment, technology and our people."

Shares in CVS pared some of the early steep losses to close down 373p, or 17.9 per cent, at £17.13.

Shares in the rival Pets at Home Group also dropped, by 35½p, or 9.35 per cent, to close at 343¼p. Its vet practices set prices autonomously, although the prescription of medicines is the company's second largest cost, after staff.

Some analysts and trade bodies were sceptical about the necessity of such a broad investigation. Analysts at Jefferies said that "much of the inflation in the cost of vet services is being driven directly by the shortage of vet practitioners and the, justified in our view, inflation in vet salaries."

RBC analysts said: "CVS generally seeks 5 per cent per annum increases (two increases in 2022 due to inflation), but that it tends to achieve a net 3 per cent rise as some services are more price competitive. This does not seem egregious to us."

Malcolm Morley, president of the British Veterinary Association, said it welcomed the review, but added: "We've not seen any hard data or real evidence to suggest that corporatisation is driving up prices or negatively impacting quality of care."

Alarm over timing of release

A press release from the Competition and Markets Authority announcing the vet sector review was sent to journalists at 10.12am on Wednesday. The information was sent under "strict embargo" for release at a minute past midnight on Thursday (Max Kendix writes).

The Times understands that the CMA assessed the announcement and deemed it not to be market-moving, largely because it had not yet made findings or used its formal powers. Yet shares in CVS Group fell by a third in the morning.

The move raised eyebrows. Lord Tyrie, a former CMA chairman, said: "Information that might reasonably be thought to move markets needs to be handled with care."

TIM STEWART NEWS LIMITED



Port, which will employ 1,000 workers and produce 50,000 vehicles a year

has been left building diesel Vivaros. But a crunch is coming as Stellantis has ruled that all Vauxhall models will be all-electric by 2028.

The company is understood to be pressing ministers to provide the sort of support for Luton that it did at Ellesmere Port, reckoned to be £30 million of taxpayers' money out of a total £100 million refit. But Stellantis is being made all sorts of "green deal" offers to build the electric Vivaro in other European jurisdictions and the UK government will have to counter such moves.

Commenting on the reopening of Ellesmere Port, Kemi Badenoch, the business and trade secretary, said: "It is a very visible demonstration that this government has got the right plan for the UK's automotive industry."

The government and 1,000 Luton workers will hope so.

That's a cell: Shell wants €1.8bn for battery stake

Emily Gosden

Shell is looking to sell a majority stake in Sonnen, the German home battery storage company it acquired four years ago, in a deal worth up to €1.8 billion.

The energy giant's move is the latest scaling back of its power and clean energy businesses under Wael Sawan, the new chief executive, who last week agreed to offload its UK household supply business to Octopus Energy.

Sonnen makes smart domestic battery storage units, which are designed to be combined with household solar panels to enable customers to store the electricity they generate until they want to use it.

Shell reportedly paid about €500 million for Sonnen when it acquired full control of the company four years ago, having made an initial investment in 2018. It said at the time that "full ownership of Sonnen will allow us to offer more choice to customers seeking reliable, affordable and cleaner energy".

Shell is understood to have begun a sales process and is hoping to retain a minority interest in the group, although it is open to selling the entire company, sources said. The planned sale was first reported by Handelsblatt, the German newspaper, which said that Sonnen could be valued at between €1.35 billion and €1.8 billion.

Sonnen was founded in 2010. As well as basic energy storage, its batteries can be used to form "virtual power plants", whereby power from a large number of devices is aggregated and sold to the electricity network operator, earning extra revenues for the homeowner. Its batteries retail for more than £6,500 in Britain and the company says that it has installed about 90,000 globally.

Shell is Europe's biggest oil and gas group, with record profits of $40 billion last year. It is pursuing a goal of net-zero emissions by 2050 but Sawan, who succeeded Ben van Beurden at the start of this year, has moved to reduce its presence in the electricity sector.

Shell declined to comment on the planned sale. A spokesman for Sonnen said: "We will not comment on reports about Shell's business deals. In principle, Sonnen is continuing its global growth course in the rapidly expanding storage market."

Lobbyists could speak with one voice

Robert Miller

The self-styled "voice of British business" and the manufacturers' group Make UK have confirmed they are in talks about areas of potential collaboration that could be the prelude to a full-blown merger.

"Make UK and the CBI are in early-stage discussions to explore how the two parties might work closer together," Make UK, which speaks for 20,000 companies and three million people in the manufacturing and engineering sectors, told Sky News. "These discussions are positive and constructive but remain at an early stage."

The CBI issued a virtually identical statement.

The beleaguered business leaders lobby group considered winding itself up this year after being embroiled in allegations of sexual misconduct, a saga that led to the departure of Tony Danker, its director-general, and resignations in protest by members including Aviva, John Lewis and NatWest.

Rain Newton-Smith, 48, was appointed as Danker's successor in April having previously been the CBI's chief economist for nine years.



Rain Newton-Smith's CBI is in discussions with Makers UK

Members voted in June for the group to survive in a revamped form. While the cuts would affect fewer than ten jobs, the move was seen as being symbolic of the retrenchment taking place at what was for decades Britain's foremost business representative group.

The employers' body has confirmed it is closing offices in Washington, Beijing and Delhi, leaving it with only one overseas presence, in Brussels.

It was unclear last night how a formal merger would work, whether the CBI's name would disappear in favour of Make UK's or how a combined organisation would represent non-manufacturing businesses.

Founded in 1965, the CBI, previously known as the Confederation of British Industry, now claims to speak for 170,000 businesses, from 190,000 in April. In June members voted 93 per cent for the organisation to carry on with reformed governance and culture.

Fox Williams, a law firm, was appointed to carry out an independent investigation and several people were dismissed by the CBI.

Danker has said he will sue the organisation after being made the "fall guy" for serious misconduct allegations that pre-dated his tenure.

Melrose takes off as founder moves on



BUSINESS COMMENTARY *Tracey Boles*

Timing is everything. Just ask the bosses at Melrose, the one-time restructuring firm that is now a big player in the aerospace industry thanks to its £8 billion takeover of GKN in 2018.

The outgoing chief executive Simon Peckham pursued GKN — whose history dates back to the time of Henry VIII — in the belief that aerospace was a "great place to be". Then the pandemic hit, bringing a historic slump in demand. Now the sector is set to take off again in step with a strong recovery. Melrose revealed yesterday that revenue and adjusted profits were both up.

But has Melrose's ownership been equally good for what was GKN? During the bitter takeover battle, the former was painted as an asset stripper. Certainly jobs have gone but Peckham describes a more nuanced strategy: stop doing things that lose money, restructure, invest.

In more evidence of a private equity-style approach, Melrose has flipped assets. In 2012 it bought the gas-metering experts Elster for £1.8 billion and sold it to Honeywell three years later for £3.3 billion. The fear was that the former GKN would also be flipped or sold overseas. Instead, in April Melrose, which has a market capitalisation of more than £7 billion, became a pure-play aerospace company after GKN automotive was spun off into a new entity on the London stock exchange called Dowlais.

Now Peckham, who next year is leaving the firm he helped to found, is enthused about the prospects for Melrose, particularly its engine arm. Profits are expected to double this financial year and again in 2025 thanks to fat aerospace order books and the sheer number of planes on order (report, page 36).

As someone who "doesn't play golf" or want to retire, Peckham, 61, plans to launch a "Melrose 2" in time. With the original's share price having risen nearly 1,300 per cent in 20 years and a number of bumper returns to shareholders, investors are bound to be watching with interest for when he does.

Flight rights

Jet2 has taken a £13 million hit from the air traffic control failure over the August bank holiday and the summer wildfires in Greece. Even so, strong summer bookings mean the holiday group is on track to beat previous forecasts for the year ending next March (report, page 38).

Will there be a similar happy ending for the many people caught up in the chaos? Much has been written about compensation for delays and cancellations but I had my own experience which yielded several insights. The day before the air traffic control outage, I endured a four-hour delay on a domestic flight. Staff sickness was to blame. Under the airline's own rules, this meant they had to pay up.

On completion of an online form, approval came in seconds and payment in days. But it was a different experience when it came to the £3 meal vouchers the airline — not Jet2 — provided while we waited. They proved to be an empty gesture: The airport's retailers refused to take them for fear of not being recompensed by the carrier.

All this points to the need to reform the compensation rules for flight disruption, including who is responsible for paying. If my flight had been delayed by extreme weather like countless others that day, I would have received nothing because the airline would have pointed to events outside its control. That will surely be the financial outcome for thousands caught up in the air traffic control debacle. Nats, the UK's air traffic manager which is part owned by airlines and by the government, is under no obligation to pay up. It's time for a rethink.

Currys' Nordic noir

As Wilko shop closures loom and many Debenhams stores remain boarded up, it is hard not to question the future of the high street. Therefore I was surprised by the results from Currys, which has about 300 stores in the UK and Ireland. The UK business is more profitable, achieved by offering higher margin credit and repair services. While this strategy has worked in the UK, the Nordic market is a different story. There, Currys is experiencing its very own noir: like-for-like revenue was down 8 per cent in the 17 weeks to August 26. Overall, however, the trend appears to be in the right direction for the retail stalwart despite fierce competition. Analysts at Liberum hailed a "solid start" to the 2024 financial year. Investors are yet to be convinced, though, with shares down 39 per cent in past six months. The hoped-for Nordic turnaround will be key to changing sentiment.

Pensions alert

The more I read about the UK's dire lack of pension savings, the more alarming it gets. Yet this is not new. More than 20 years ago there were articles about the "savings gap" — the difference between what people are putting away for retirement and what they will actually need.

Since then we have had auto-enrolment. Despite its success in making sure more people put money aside, research from True Potential, the investment platform, suggests that an average auto-enrolled client risks being left £5,573.06 per year short of a comfortable retirement income if they were to retire at 66 and live until 85.

The debate on pensions has centred on the need to increase contribution levels and on structural reform. I remain in favour of shock tactics to bring about change, so will share this, which was in an Abrdn and Citi report out earlier this week: nearly a third of the UK workforce are not saving for a pension at all. That will leave them reliant on a state pension worth just over £200 a week. As I said, alarming.

tracey.boles@thetimes.co.uk
Alistair Osborne is away

Business

Eurozone faces recession as growth stalls

Jack Barnett Economics Correspondent

The Eurozone could slip back into recession this year as new data signalled a sharper slowdown in economic growth than first thought.

In its final estimate of GDP growth in the 20-member bloc, Eurostat said output expanded by 0.1 per cent in the three months to June, largely as a result of a slump in German manufacturing. The reading is a downgrade from the initial estimate of a 0.3 per cent rise and is worse than analysts' forecast.

Andrew Kenningham, chief Europe economist at Capital Economics, said: "With business surveys having turned down sharply in July and August, construction and industry struggling and the labour market easing, we suspect that the economy will slip into recession in the second half of the year."

Output was anchored by the bloc's economic engines posting poor growth. Italy's economy contracted 0.4 per cent in the second quarter and Germany stalled. The Netherlands clocked negative growth of 0.3 per cent. Spain and France expanded. The UK, meanwhile, is forecast to grow by 0.4 per cent.

A poorer growth reading illustrates that the European Central Bank's nine straight interest rate rises are squeezing households and businesses more than feared. It raises the chances that the bank will hold off on lifting borrowing costs again at their meeting next Thursday. It has hoisted the European deposit rate to a record high of 3.75 per cent to tame inflation.

The euro weakened 0.15 per cent against the US dollar after the GDP revisions were published.

Although unchanged, the final estimate confirmed that the German economy stalled in the second quarter, reinforcing concerns over the health of Europe's largest economy.

Economic stagnation has become the "new normal" in Germany, analysts said, after separate data signalled that its once world-leading industrial sector was losing ground on its peers. Manufacturing output dropped 0.8 per cent over July, worse than the 0.5 per cent contraction forecast by analysts, according to the German statistics agency Destatis. Although the drop was shallower than the 1.4 per cent in June, it was the third month in a row that factory activity has shrunk.

Germany has for more than three decades leant on its manufacturing sector, which supplied the world with cars, computers and industrial equipment, to fuel economic growth but a surge in global energy prices and rising costs has made the sector less competitive. Its trade partners have also expanded domestic production, diluting the need to import products from Germany. Industrial production is about 7 per cent lower than its pre-pandemic level.

Carsten Brzeski, global head of macro at the Dutch bank ING, said Germany "finally seems to have woken up to the reality that it has lost international competitiveness". He added: "With earlier investment and reforms, the economy could have tackled the current challenges better. Economic stagnation is the new normal."

A recent batch of economic data has reignited recession risks in Germany. Retail sales, exports, industrial orders and production all contracted in July, meaning that GDP is likely to shrink in the three months to September. A recession is defined as two straight quarters of negative growth.

Yuan's fall adds to Beijing's headaches

China's currency weakened to its lowest level against the US dollar in nearly 16 years after disappointing export and inflation data added to investor concerns about the world's second largest economy (Jack Barnett writes).

The yuan slipped to a low of 7.32 to the dollar yesterday, its poorest point since 2007, below the level when Beijing in effect shut down the country's economy during the pandemic.

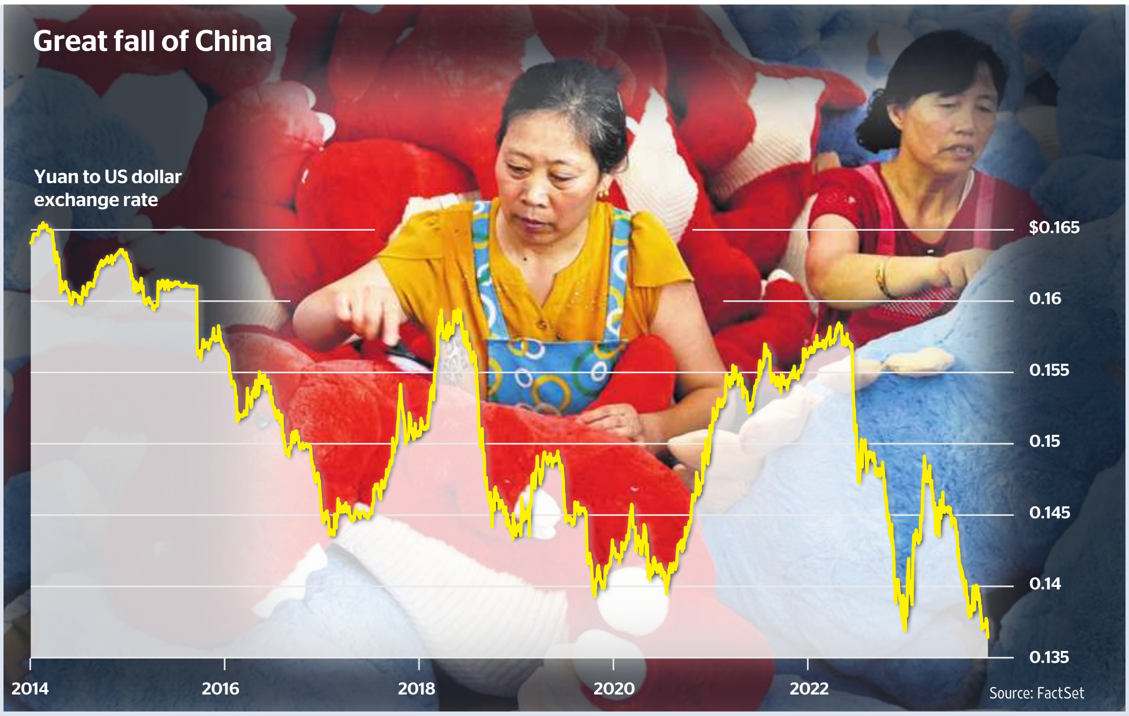
The latest fall came after new figures showed that Chinese exports contracted 8.8 per cent annually in August, shrinking for the fourth consecutive month. Although slightly better than analysts had forecast, it signals that China's export position is continuing to weaken, dealing a blow to its trade-oriented economic model.

Central banks' efforts to tame inflation with sharp interest rate increases, compounded by elevated inflation hitting consumer finances, has quashed demand for Chinese products in western economies.

"[Trade] conditions are likely to remain weak in the second half of this year on the back of slowing global demand for Chinese goods," analysts at the consultancy Pantheon Macroeconomics said. They added: "Periods of sticky inflation have dented real wages in western economies while elevated levels of interest rates have reduced their purchasing power via higher debt-servicing costs. This coupled with the fizzling out of the post-Covid spending spree, [resulted in] weak demand for discretionary Chinese goods, bar vehicles."

The yuan is down by almost 6 per cent against the dollar this year as the two countries' contrasting economic fortunes piled pressure on the exchange rate, despite a series of measures by the Chinese authorities to prop up the currency.

Domestic spending is stuttering because of record high youth unemployment and worries about its fragile property sector. Poor demand pushed imports 7.3 per cent lower annually in August, narrowing China's trade surplus to $68.3 billion in August from $80.6 billion in July.



A contraction in exports led to the Chinese currency weakening against the US dollar to its lowest level since 2007

Job market finally shows signs of cooling

Jack Barnett

Britain's jobs market is cooling, with hiring down and wage growth slowing, easing pressure on the Bank of England to push on with interest rate rises.

A rapid expansion in the pool of available workers, combined with a pullback in hiring amid anxiety about the health of the economy, is rebalancing the workforce. Research by the consultancy KPMG and the Recruitment and Employment Confederation (REC) found that permanent placements had contracted at the quickest pace since June 2020, with the employment index down last month to 38.9 from 42.4.

The part-time hiring index also slipped to 49.5, the number of temporary positions having fallen for the first time since July 2020. It is the first time both indicators have fallen below the 50-point threshold that separates growth from contraction.

The Bank of England's monetary policy committee (MPC) has emphasised that it needs to see the jobs market to rebalance and pay growth to recede before it stops lifting interest rates.

The committee is trying to cool the jobs market by increasing the number of available workers and curbing vacancies, creating what economists call "slack". The intention is to bring down wage growth and inflation. Candidate availability is growing at one of the fastest paces since the 2008 financial crisis, suggesting that people are returning to the labour market, which should keep a lid on salary growth.

> **7.8%**
> **Wage growth in UK, while the unemployment rate is 4.2 per cent**
> Source: ONS

Neil Carberry, REC chief executive, said: "August is always a slower month for new permanent roles, but this has been exacerbated in 2023 by the lack of confidence to start the new hiring we saw among firms in the spring."

Unemployment is at the historically low level of 4.2 per cent and pay growth has reached a record high of 7.8 per cent, a dynamic that the Bank thinks will keep inflation elevated. KPMG and the REC said wages were still growing but the pace of expansion is down to its lowest level since March 2021 for permanent hires.

Andrew Bailey, the Bank's governor, hinted this week that the MPC may have hit its interest rate peak, having lifted Britain's base rate 14 times in a row to a 15-year high of 5.25 per cent. Huw Pill and Ben Broadbent, chief economist and deputy governor of the Bank respectively, have indicated support for keeping interest rates higher for longer.

Currency traders, however, still think that the MPC will back a 0.25 percentage point increase at its next meeting on September 21, although the probability of such a move has slipped from 96 per cent to 86 per cent this month.

Sigh of relief from firms as pace of price rises slows

Jack Barnett

Businesses plan to raise prices over the coming year by the smallest amount since Russia's invasion of Ukraine 19 months ago.

Companies in the UK expect to lift prices by an average of 4.9 per cent over the next 12 months, down from 5.2 per cent, according to the Bank of England's latest survey of business leaders.

It was the weakest reading since February 2022, the month that Russia launched its invasion of Ukraine, sending energy prices sharply higher.

The slower pace of price rises has been driven by raw material costs falling over the past year and concerns over lower consumer spending in the face of the cost of living crisis. The Bank of England's latest data shows that inflation has dropped from a 40-year high of 11.1 per cent to 6.8 per cent.

Members of the rate setting monetary policy committee (MPC) pay close attention to the survey of 2,000 chief finance officers to inform their interest rate decisions. Lower pricing expectations may open the door for the committee to stop raising rates.

Earlier this week, Andrew Bailey, the Bank's governor, hinted that the MPC was near the end of its rate rising cycle after 14 straight increases. Huw Pill, the central bank's chief economist, and Ben Broadbent, deputy governor for monetary policy, have echoed similar sentiments. The MPC has said it needs to see a sustained decline in pay growth before ending further tightening.

Wage rises are forecast to average 5 per cent over the next year. Official estimates have wages rising at the fastest pace on record in the latest quarter.

The Bank has raised the cost of borrowing to 5.25 per cent, a 15-year high, in the fastest tightening campaign since the 1980s.

Harry Wallop



Bosses should do the right thing for the planet's sake, not for their bonus

Pennon is the parent company of South West Water, a company regularly named as one of Britain's least loved utilities, and there is stiff competition for that title. If you read its annual report, though, you will find it far keener to talk about being "a purpose-led business, shaped by our values and culture". I dream of a day when a company dares to proclaim that it is purposeless, it just wants to make widgets or sell you some nice stuff at a profit.

In April South West Water was fined £2.15 million for environmental offences across Devon and Cornwall between 2016 and 2020, "which resulted in significant environmental damage", the Environment Agency said. After the chemical spill at Kilmington thousands of fish died in the River Axe, including some protected species.

The only reference in the annual report to this fine, which admittedly did occur after the end of the reporting period, is a two-sentence footnote on page 219. Maybe it will get a more detailed airing in next year's annual report and, possibly, affect the bonuses of executives.

That is because, along with an increasing number of companies, a fifth of the chief executive's bonus is linked to ESG, or environmental, social and governance measures. Flick through FTSE 100 companies' remuneration reports and you will see that most now award bonuses partly based on how much CO_2 emissions it has cut, how many women it appoints to the board or, in the case of Tesco, how much food it has wasted.

Analysis from PwC and the London Business School found that 78 per cent of Europe's top 500 companies had adopted some measure of carbon target in executive pay. Surely this is a good thing? If we believe that companies exist not solely to make profits but to create wealth in the widest sense of the word then ensuring that those in charge do not trash the planet is to be applauded.

Of course, measuring an improvement in the profit margin or earnings per share is easy; measuring an improvement in "people's health, confidence and wellbeing", one of the metrics that Unilever uses to assess bonuses, is less easy. This is the problem with ESG-linked pay.



"We'll Meet (The Targets) Again..."

Wading through the often highly opaque verbiage in companies' annual reports reveals that a lot of the measures on which these bonuses are based are, frankly, laughable.

Take Unilever, maker of Marmite and Dove soap. A quarter of the chief executive's share awards are linked to the company's "sustainability progress index". Some of the metrics are laudable: buying palm oil from areas that have not been deforested. But one measure is: "Number of people reached by brand communications and initiatives that help improve health and wellbeing and help advance equity and inclusion." Hang on a second: you are one of the world's biggest advertising spenders and one of your targets is to pay for preachy adverts that "challenge stereotypical beauty narratives". If more than 500 million people see these adverts, then the boss's bonus target is reached. Wouldn't you know? An astonishing 686 million people saw those adverts last year.

At the tobacco company BAT the proportion of its turnover derived from plastic vapes rather than cigarettes is one of the bonus measures. Because "sustainability and ESG have long been an intrinsic part of BAT's DNA", it says. Of course they have.

Even the top three directors at BAE Systems will receive a bonus next year that is partly based on how much it has cut greenhouse gas emissions. I read that in a report whose front cover is illustrated with a fighter jet and various missile launchers. I am presuming that if you are at the wrong end of a Stingray Mod 1 lightweight torpedo you do not really care about the carbon footprint of the device that is about to blow up your submarine. If the top three executives at BAE really cared about greenhouse gases maybe they might consider giving up their "private use of a chauffeur-driven car", listed as one of their benefits.

At NatWest the now departed Alison Rose got a bonus partly based on "Purpose Score" and "Culture Score", derived from a staff questionnaire. This is another issue with all these ESG measures: too many of them are self-assessed or based on spurious outside consultancies being paid a hefty fee to rubber-stamp a company's progress or give them a carbon kitemark.

The result? Bonuses all round. The PwC/London Business School report discovered that payouts in 2022 averaged 86 per cent of the possible maximum and more than half the companies paid out at 100 per cent. In the boardrooms of UK plc the planet is not burning, it is all tickety boo.

These pay awards have been instigated not by the executives themselves but mostly by shareholders who do not really care about adverts that challenge beauty stereotypes; they want to invest in a company that will still be going strong for many years. If that means shifting a few more bottles of shampoo to those from "under-represented and underserved communities", great.

A recent study of 4,400 companies around the world led by Stefan Reichelstein, a professor at Stanford Graduate School of Business, found, however, that companies that used ESG pay metrics had no appreciable increase in profits or share price. They did not damage a company's finances but, Reichelstein said, "there's this adage that doing good means doing well. We found no support for that paradigm."

In any case, most of these bonuses are predicated on bosses doing the right thing: not pumping chemicals into rivers, not discriminating against women, not tearing down rainforests, not actively promoting cancer-causing cigarettes. Do they really need to be rewarded handsomely for doing so?

Harry Wallop is a consumer journalist and broadcaster. Follow him on Twitter @hwallop

BAT makes belated exit from Russia after sale

Alex Ralph

The maker of Lucky Strike and Dunhill cigarettes has agreed to sell its Russian and Belarusian business 18 months after it committed itself to doing so after Moscow's invasion of Ukraine.

British American Tobacco, one of the world's biggest tobacco groups, said the business had been offloaded to a consortium led by members of its Russian management team "in compliance with local and international laws".

The sale is expected to be completed next month. BAT said that it would "no longer have a presence in Russia or Belarus and will receive no financial gain from ongoing sales in these markets".

BAT employs about 2,500 people in Russia, one of the world's largest tobacco markets, where it established a business in 1991. It has a head office in Moscow, 75 regional offices and a manufacturing facility in St Petersburg. It also has an office in Belarus.

Last year the businesses accounted for 3.1 per cent of group revenue and 2.4 per cent of its adjusted operating profit.

A spokesman declined to comment on the financial terms of the agreement or on whether BAT had an option to buy back the business at a later stage.

"Until the transfer is complete, BAT Russia and Belarus will continue to be consolidated in the group financials in accordance with IFRS [International Financial Reporting Standards] accounting standards," the spokesman said. "However, while the Russian business generates revenue locally, the business is effectively ringfenced in line with international and local laws, meaning we have not repatriated any profits."

BAT had pledged in March last year to "rapidly transfer" its Russian business after an exodus of other multinational companies. It took a £612 million charge in its last full-year results and recognised an additional £17 million in associated costs in the first six months of the year.

Jack Bowles, chief executive when the results were published in February, had said that the transfer was taking time because the company had to "take care" of sanctions in Britain, the European Union and the United States, as well as the regulatory environment in Russia.

BAT remains confident of achieving its full-year guidance. The shares closed down 0.1 per cent, or 2p, at £25.82.

T AUDIO

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Business

Melrose changes top crew as aerospace switch pays off



Emily Gosden

Melrose Industries has upgraded its profit outlook and announced the departure of its chief executive as the former turnaround specialist focuses on its successful aerospace business.

The FTSE 100 group said it now expected to make adjusted operating profit of between £375 million and £385 million from aerospace this year, more than 8 per cent higher than its previous guidance, and deliver increased profit margins in its engines business amid a revival in aviation demand.

Melrose said that in line with its "new strategic direction" as a pure-play aerospace group, Simon Peckham, its co-founder and chief executive since 2012, and Geoffrey Martin, its finance director since 2005, would both stand down in early March. The shares closed up 5.5 per cent, or 28¼p, at 537¼p.

Peter Dilnot, Melrose's chief operating officer, will take over as chief executive while Matthew Gregory, chief financial officer of GKN Aerospace, will be finance director. Christopher Miller, another co-founder who is executive vice-chairman, will also step down.

Melrose reported strong half-year results and said that it would start a £500 million share buyback programme early, from next month.

Melrose was founded by Peckham, Miller and David Roper and listed in London in 2003 when it floated on the junior Aim market, raising £12 million. The founders grew the business into a FTSE 100 industrial conglomerate that is now valued at about £7.4 billion.

Melrose announced in May that it was ditching its "buy, improve, sell" strategy that it had pursued for two decades. Instead it has opted to focus on the aerospace business, which it acquired as part of its controversial 2018 takeover of GKN, becoming what it described yesterday as "a long-term aerospace group with exceptional organic growth prospects".

Since spinning off GKN's automotive, powder metallurgy and hydrogen businesses to form Dowlais Group in April, it has said it had no plans to seek to sell any part of the group.

Dilnot is an engineer by training and was a helicopter pilot in the armed forces. He spent seven years at Boston Consulting Group and led Renewi, formerly Shanks.

Melrose's GKN aerospace business employs about 4,000 people. It has two main divisions: one making components for jet engines for Pratt & Whitney, GE and Rolls-Royce, and the other making parts for the wing, fuselage and tail assemblies for aircraft manufacturers including Airbus and Boeing.

In the first half of this year, Melrose revenues increased to £1.6 billion, from £1.4 billion in the same period of 2022, while adjusted operating profit in the aerospace business increased to £175 million, from £67 million.

Peckham said that Melrose was seeing "continued strong momentum and market recovery underpinned by robust demand".

Operating profit margins in the engines business increased to 24.5 per cent, ahead of prior full-year guidance of 22 per cent, and putting it on course to meet its 2025 guidance of 28 per cent.

We got our takeovers right, insists Peckham



Daily Mail seeks help from Qatar in bid for Telegraph

Lord Rothermere's Daily Mail and General Trust newspaper group has held talks with potential backers from Qatar over a possible combined bid for the Telegraph Media Group, owner of the Daily and Sunday Telegraph print and online titles.

DMGT, owner of the Daily Mail, The Mail on Sunday and Metro newspapers, is in discussions over additional equity to finance a bid for the titles that could cost more than £500 million, the Financial Times reported.

Lloyds Banking Group seized control of the business from the Barclay family in June after the breakdown of talks over £1 billion of debts owed by the Barclays to the bank. It is understood that the bank has written down the value of the loans in recent years.

In a statement, DMGT said: "To date we do not have a formal relationship with any [Middle Eastern] investors; however, if we did, we would only do so if we have the majority of economic and equity risk, and the control needed to invest in the business and protect its editorial independence."

The Barclay family is also understood to have sounded out investors from the UAE to back a bid to buy back the Telegraph. The family, which declined to comment, is said to have made repeated bids to do so, with the most recent for more than £600 million.

Abu Dhabi's RedBird IMI has also reportedly held talks about supporting a bid for the group.

Others known to be interested in acquiring the titles include: National World, run by the newspaper veteran David Montgomery; and Sir William Lewis, former editor-in-chief of the Telegraph, who is putting together a consortium. Sir Paul Marshall, the hedge-fund millionaire, and Daniel Kretinsky, the billionaire Czech investor, have also been linked.



Simon Peckham steps down from Melrose after an outspoken and highly lucrative tenure that saw him court controversy through the takeover of GKN and as the recipient of a £43 million pay package in a single year.

The 61-year old from Newcastle trained as a lawyer before working at Wassall, an industrial conglomerate, from 1990. There he rose to become an executive director and worked with David Roper and Christopher Miller, joining them when they left to launch Melrose. Peckham initially served as Melrose's chief operating officer before taking the top job in 2012.

When Melrose hit the headlines with its 2018 hostile takeover of GKN it faced accusations that it was an asset stripper that would jeopardise jobs. Peckham insisted that its record was very different. "Private equity do ten deals and know they get a couple wrong," he told The Sunday Times. "We've never done one wrong."

Simon Peckham, top left, courted controversy with Melrose's acquisition of GKN and faced accusations of asset stripping

In 2017 his pay package hit almost £43 million. In an interview he insisted: "We get paid well when we have performed. We also don't get paid when it wouldn't be right."

Blackstone-led group shrinks LSEG holding

Ben Martin Banking Editor

The former owners of the Refinitiv financial information business have raised a further £2.75 billion by offloading another chunk of shares in London Stock Exchange Group.

Refinitiv was sold by a Blackstone-led consortium to LSEG for $27 billion in 2021, with the company behind the London exchange paying for the business in shares.

The deal handed a 37 per cent stake in LSEG to Blackstone, the American private equity firm; Thomson Reuters, the news and information group; Canada Pension Plan Investment Board and GIC, the Singaporean sovereign wealth fund.

They have cut their shareholding significantly this year by selling stock worth £2.7 billion in May and £2 billion in March.

The consortium revealed late on Wednesday that it would undertake another sale and confirmed yesterday that it had raised £2 billion by offloading 25.5 million LSEG shares to institutional and retail investors at £79.50 apiece. In a separate transaction, LSEG bought 9.5 million shares from the consortium in an off-market deal priced at £78.94 a share. This raised a further £750 million for Refinitiv's former owners.

An additional 2.7 million shares have been sold as part of a derivative deal on LSEG stock that was struck by the consortium. The proceeds from this sale have not gone to the Blackstone-led group.

All of this has shrunk the stake in LSEG owned by the consortium to about 12 per cent. The stock exchange group's shares closed down 194p, or 2.4 per cent, at £80.70.

The share sale is a boost for investment bankers in the City of London, who have been wrestling with a sharp slowdown in deal volumes, particularly in equity capital market transactions, since last year. This slump in activity has affected the fees that financiers earn from handling transactions. A large group of banks worked on the LSEG deal, which was arranged by Barclays, Bank of America, Goldman Sachs, JPMorgan and Morgan Stanley. A number of other firms, including Jefferies, HSBC and UBS, also helped with the share sale.

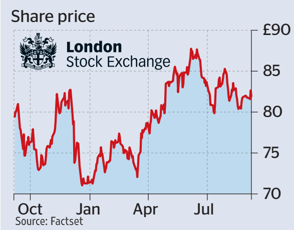
LSEG, listed on the FTSE 100, is a leading player in the financial markets. It now owns the London exchange as well as the Turquoise equities trading platform, LCH, which is the world's largest derivatives clearing house, and the FTSE Russell indices.

David Schwimmer, a former Goldman Sachs banker, became the group's chief executive in 2018 and he struck the Refinitiv deal a year later as part of a bold push to expand the group's operations in financial data services, a potentially lucrative area as trading in markets becomes increasingly electronic.

It took until January 2021 for LSEG to secure clearance from competition regulators to complete the purchase. Since then, Schwimmer and his team have been undertaking the complex task of integrating the data business into the wider LSEG group. The company announced last month that it was retiring the Refinitiv brand in the coming months in favour of Workspace.

Data and analytics is now by far LSEG's single biggest division, generating revenues of £2.6 billion in the six months to the end of June. Group revenues reached £4.2 billion.

Floating or sinking?



Online bank welcomes millionth user

James Hurley

Zopa, the online bank, has raised £75 million to help finance its expansion and says it has breached the one million customer mark.

The bank, which launched in 2020, said it was generating £250 million in revenue and expected to record its first annual profit in the current financial year. The latest funding, which came from existing investors including Silverstripe, which backs financial services firms, brings the total raised by Zopa Bank to £530 million, with £150 million secured in 2023.

Jaidev Janardana, Zopa's chief executive, said the new funding was primarily needed to meet regulatory capital requirements as the bank grows, but he added that it would also be used to finance new product lines.

Zopa declined to comment on whether SoftBank, the Japanese conglomerate that backed the bank in 2021 at a valuation of roughly $1 billion, had taken part in the latest investment.

While Zopa has only been a bank for three years, it was founded in 2005, pioneering peer-to-peer lending, the online matching of individual investors with borrowers. It said it would leave this declining industry in 2021.

In common with rivals, the bank said it has been benefiting from growing net interest income. It offers consumer borrowing and savings products and its biggest source of income is personal loans. It has approved £8 billion worth of personal loans over 18 years.

The bank has so far attracted £3.5 billion in deposits, has more than £2 billion of loans on its balance sheet, and issued 470,000 credit cards. It said it hopes to have five million customers by 2027. This year Zopa launched a "buy now, pay later" product and a "Smart Isa" savings product, which blends easy access and fixed-term savings in one account.

In 2022 Zopa's operating income was £151 million, up 131 per cent from the year before. It made a pre-tax loss of £26 million last year, down from £34.2 million in 2021.

Janardana said customers were showing "more resilience than expected" during the cost of living crisis, including by restricting discretionary spending, and that the bank's credit performance was "stable to improving".

He described the latest funding as a "seal of approval for our responsible and sustainable business model, our strong unit economics, and our vision to build Britain's best bank".



Jaidev Janardana said his customers had shown resilience

Treasury refuses to back down on tax-free shopping

Max Kendix

The Treasury has signalled its commitment to the "tourist tax" after backbench MPs put the case for reinstating tax-free shopping for international visitors to the government in a parliamentary debate yesterday.

Victoria Atkins, a Treasury minister, told MPs that tourists "come to the UK to look at our beautiful architecture, to visit theatres, to visit wonderful historic locations … we do not just look at what we can do to encourage tourism in terms of tax levers".

Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown, the Conservative MP who led the debate in Westminster Hall, disputed the Treasury's reliance on Office of Budget Responsibility (OBR) figures suggesting that restoring the scheme, which was scrapped in 2021, would result in only 50-80,000 extra visitors.

The scheme had allowed tourists to claim back VAT on their purchases while visiting Britain.

Clifton-Brown said the calculations were "based upon the wrong methodology that does not consider the major upside to the economy", and that data from retailers showed "the OBR figure is being proved significantly wrong". A report by Oxford Economics estimates that the move would attract more than 1.6 million extra visitors to the UK.

The campaign to reverse the policy, labelled a "tourist tax" by supporters, has gained backing from more than 350 retailers and cross-party support. Sir Ed Davey, leader of the Liberal Democrats, said: "This self-defeating move has deprived our cities and town centres of millions and has put the UK at a disadvantage compared to our international competitors."

The Treasury says it will cost £2 billion to restore the scheme, which does not "directly benefit" Britons.

Business

Jet2 soars despite wildfire disruption

Dominic Walsh

Jet2 said it was on track to beat market expectations for the full year despite absorbing a £13 million hit from the Rhodes wildfires and air traffic control meltdown.

Britain's biggest tour operator said its capacity was 7.3 per cent higher than last summer, at 15.26 million, although it had reduced slightly since July due to the wildfires.

The company has also been forced to cancel a number of flights and package holidays to the Greek island of Skiathos after it endured serious flash flooding and severe winds in recent days.

Jet2 announced the cancellation of all flights and holidays due to depart for Skiathos up until Tuesday after axing six flights this week.

Storm Daniel has caused widespread damage and disruption on the island, although the cost of the disruption to airlines and travel companies has yet to be quantified. Jet2 said it would provide refunds while it was also working to arrange flights to repatriate customers.

In a trading update at its annual meeting, the company said that it had experienced "strong late booking momentum" in July and August, with September showing similar trends.

Load factors — the proportion of seats sold — were 0.5 percentage points behind summer 2022, a slight improvement on early July, while higher-margin package holidays accounted for 71.7 per cent of total passengers, 4.8 points higher than last summer.

It said bookings for this winter were also encouraging, with average load factors 0.3 points ahead of the previous winter at the same point. It increased capacity by 20.4 per cent to 4.47 million seats and, as in the summer, pricing had "remained robust".

For the year to the end of March 2024 it is expecting profit before tax and foreign exchange revaluations to be between £480 million and £520 million 7 per cent ahead of consensus — "dependent on avoiding any material extraneous events" in the rest of the year.

Jet2 also told shareholders it planned to take advantage of growing demand for package holidays from price-conscious customers by boosting capacity for next summer by 11 per cent. It said holidays were already on sale and, although it was early days, load factors were slightly ahead of summer 2023 at the same point.

The annual meeting capped a momentous few weeks for Jet2 as it announced that Philip Meeson, 75, its founder and chairman, would be stepping down after 40 years at the helm, albeit remaining an adviser.

He has been replaced by Robin Terrell, 53, who has been a director at the package travel operator since 2020, having worked across consumer and online retail during his career.

Shares in Jet2 rose 6.3 per cent, or 65p, to close at £10.91.

SWNS



H2Fly, which launched the test flights, said that the fuel would be cheaper than the sustainable alternatives used at present

Flying start for hydrogen-fuelled aircraft

Katie Prescott

Liquid hydrogen has been used to power an electric aircraft for the first time, paving the way for emission-free medium to long-haul flights in future.

H2Fly, the company which launched the successful test flight, said that the plane carried a smaller engine than had ever been used before.

Four flights took place, including one that lasted for more than three hours, using liquid that allows a greater quantity of fuel to be stored in a smaller space. To make hydrogen liquid, it must be cooled to below about 250C, or close to absolute zero, which makes fuel handling a challenge.

H2Fly says that, despite the complications, liquid hydrogen will be cheaper than "sustainable" aviation fuels that are dropped directly into fuel tanks.

The flight was funded by Project Heaven, an international group of industry experts and governments aiming to promote hydrogen-based aviation fuel. Last year the aviation industry contributed to 2 per cent of global emissions.

H2Fly, a German company acquired by Joby Aviation of the United States in 2021, is trying to create a system that can be integrated into existing planes rather than requiring green aircraft to be built from scratch. "This achievement marks a watershed moment in the use of hydrogen to power aircraft," said Professor Josef Kallo, H2Fly's co-founder and chief executive.



Upbeat Lloyd's of London plays down cost of hurricane damage

Patrick Hosking Financial Editor

The cost of storm Idalia will be "quite modest" for Lloyd's of London, its chief executive said as he reported a dramatic swing back to first-half profits for the insurance market.

John Neal said the industry-wide cost of the hurricane that blasted through Florida and Georgia last week might be $5 billion to $6 billion but would be "quite incidental" for Lloyd's, whose underwriters have been cautious about taking on catastrophe risk in America.

Lloyd's chalked up a pre-tax profit of £3.9 billion in the six months to June, a swing from losses last time of £1.8 billion, as it reported the strongest underwriting performance since 2007 and reversed losses on its investments.

The closely watched combined ratio, which measures claims plus expenses as a percentage of premiums, reduced to a highly lucrative 85.2 per cent. Underwriting profits more than doubled to £2.5 billion.

Returns from its £83 billion investment portfolio also bounced back after last year, when interest rate surprises hit the mark-to-market value of its bonds. Investment profits came in at £1.8 billion, a recovery from losses last time of £3.1 billion.

Neal described the results as outstanding and said they pointed to a good full year. "We're in a good space," he added, although he warned that he was concerned that claims inflation running at 5 to 6 per cent would continue into the second half.

Lloyd's traces its roots to Edward Lloyd's coffee shop by the Thames in 1652 and has developed into the world's biggest specialist insurance market. It employs 2,000 people directly and about 35,000 through the brokers and syndicates that use it.

Gross premium income grew by 22 per cent to £29.3 billion, putting the market in a good place to meet its target for full-year growth of 20 per cent to £56 billion. Policyholders in effect paid 9.1 per cent higher premiums to insure the same risk.

The cost of many types of insurance, including property, rose sharply but other areas, such as cover against cyberattack and liability insurance for directors and officers, was softer. Neal said he was concerned that some insurers might be underpricing tail risks — the chance of a loss occurring because of a rare event — that could produce nasty surprises in 15 or 20 years.

There were few big-ticket disasters in the first half that could produce heavy losses for Lloyd's. Significant claims represented 3.6 per cent of losses, which it said was "a relatively light period for catastrophe losses".

Neal said the damage to Britain's image after the instability of the Truss era was receding. "It was deteriorating last year when we saw three prime ministers and four chancellors in less than a year; it is now stabilising," he said.

The Lloyd's boss also disclosed that the insurer was in talks with the United Nations over providing insurance cover for Ukrainian grain shipments if a new Black Sea corridor deal can be reached.

Turkey, a Nato member, is seeking to convince Russia to return to the UN-brokered Black Sea Grain Initiative after Moscow withdrew in July, ending a year of protected exports from Ukrainian ports amid the war.

"Are we happy and able to continue to provide insurances in the event that a corridor can be re-operated and can be re-established? The answer to that is yes," Neal said. "We are in active discussions with the UN about how that might happen."

Lloyd's is one of Britain's most internationally focused businesses, with 85 per cent of income coming from overseas customers.

Idalia, a category 3 hurricane, has been dubbed America's costliest climate disaster this year. It came at the start of the traditional storm season for the US east coast.

ADREES LATIF/REUTERS



Clearwater Beach in Florida was flooded last week after storm Idalia, a category 3 hurricane, battered the US east coast

Woodford investors set to decide on £180m payout

Patrick Hosking

Burnt investors in the Woodford Equity Income fund could receive £180 million in compensation for bungled administration of the fund early next year if they vote in favour of a scheme blessed by the Financial Conduct Authority.

Link Fund Solutions, the fund's administrator, has outlined how the first £180 million to £200 million tranche of an overall settlement fund of £230 million would be paid out "as soon as the first quarter of 2024".

Link, which continues to administer the liquidation and wind-up of the fund, was found guilty of misconduct by the FCA, and it and its Australian parent Link Group have conditionally agreed a compensation pot. The court-approved scheme of arrangement, which has the FCA's blessing, is due to be voted on by investors at a meeting scheduled for December 4. It needs a yes vote from 50 per cent of fund-holders who vote by number and 75 per cent of fundholders by value.

About 300,000 investors lost out in 2019 when regulators forced the gating and then liquidation of the fund to prevent a disorderly scramble to the exit after it switched its investment philosophy from liquid listed shares to illiquid unlisted ones.

The fund was run by Neil Woodford, a former Invesco manager who acquired a huge following after decades of strong returns and set up Woodford Investment Management, which attracted more than £10 billion at its peak.

Harcus Parker, a law firm pursuing a separate action on behalf of 7,500 fund-holders, warned that investors were being put in an impossible position because they might be better off making a claim with the Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS), which pays compensation to victims of maladministration by authorised firms that fail. Harcus Parker is one of three law firms separately pursuing Link.

The FCA has warned that litigation firms were "dangling" the prospect of greater remediation but that their hopes were "unrealistic".

Link Fund Solutions said the scheme was " the best outcome available".

Insurer 'still paying for past mistakes'

Ben Martin

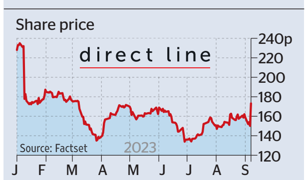
The caretaker boss of Direct Line warned that stabilising its troubled motor insurance business had taken longer than expected as the group fell to a £76.3 million loss for the first half of the year.

Pre-tax losses in the six months to the end of June were worse than analysts had forecast and widened significantly from the £11.1 million deficit that the company reported a year earlier.

The results came hours after the insurer revealed on Wednesday night it had agreed to sell its brokered commercial insurance business to privately owned RSA for at least £520 million in a deal that alleviates stock market concerns about its capital strength.

Investors, who had feared the group might resort to a share sale to bolster its balance sheet, welcomed the planned disposal and sent Direct Line's shares up by 15.8 per cent, or 24p, to close at 174p. Even so, Jon Greenwood, 55, the acting chief executive, said the FTSE 250 group continued to suffer from mistakes that it made last year and at the start of this year, when it had sold motor policies at prices that failed to properly account for the soaring cost of handling claims. Sharp increases in the price of spare parts and second-hand cars, and higher wages in repair shops, have fuelled rampant claims inflation.

Below the line



This led to a string of profit warnings and prompted the group to scrap its dividend in January. Greenwood's predecessor, Penny James, 54, stepped down shortly after the dividend was dropped.

Greenwood said he believed the group was now underwriting profitably in its motor business, although it had been slower to restore margins than hoped. This had involved "significant rate increases" in its motor division in the first half, with average renewal premiums climbing by 25 per cent.

He cautioned that this would take time to be reflected in the insurer's figures, with the impact of earlier pricing mistakes continuing to be felt next year. By that time Adam Winslow, 44, formerly a senior executive at Aviva, will have taken over as chief executive. He is due to join Direct Line in the first quarter of 2024 and Greenwood is set to leave the business.

Alexander Evans, an analyst at Citigroup, said it was "clearly a very poor set" of results from the insurer but that the brokered commercial business disposal had "removed the risk" of a share sale. The disposal involves an initial payment of £520 million and the potential for a further £30 million based on the unit's performance.

Tempus, page 40

THE TIMES

Business briefing

Inflation may be starting to come down but the UK's economic growth is still struggling and the risk of recession remains.

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Business Markets

Emma Powell **Tempus**

Buy, sell or hold: today's best share tips



Credibility is on the line for insurer

DIRECT LINE

Market cap	Half-year pre-tax loss
£1.95bn	£76.3m

Embattled insurer Direct Line is striving to restore credibility with the market. The £520 million sale of its brokered commercial business will repair a balance sheet, but the incoming boss, Adam Winslow, will need to prove that he has the stomach to push pricing up if inflation proves more stubborn than anticipated.

Offloading this business to the parent company of rival RSA will unlock about £270 million in capital, £170 million of which will be freed-up if shareholders approve the deal before the middle of December.

No more disposals are needed, says Jon Greenwood, the acting chief executive. That is fair enough — the sale would provide a crucial 45 percentage point boost in the Solvency II ratio to 192 per cent, above the top-end of a target range of 140 to 180 per cent.

Without it, efforts to rebuild capital levels would amount to slow progress. A failure to increase premiums in the face of elevated rates of claims inflation has hammered underwriting profitability. In the first six months of the year it made a pre-tax loss of £76.3 million, well above the £11.1 million it suffered over the same period last year.

Earlier this year the bill for weather-related claims was double what was expected, proving the tipping point for Penny James, the former chief executive, who left shortly after. Now its motor business is the issue. The division's combined operating ratio, a measure of underwriting profitability, worsened to almost 126 per cent. Anything above 100 per cent represents a loss.

Direct Line had underestimated the pace of claims inflation and just how stubborn higher repair parts and labour costs would be. Prices for average motor premiums climbed by 19 per cent in the first six months of the year — 25 per cent for renewals.

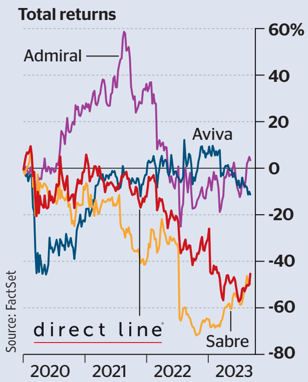
That cost the insurer customers, which declined by 4 per cent in motor, alongside a 1.5 per cent fall in home policies. Motor claims inflation is set to be in the high single digits this year as labour costs prove stubborn despite the price of second-hand cars cooling. Direct Line may have to sacrifice policy numbers for a while longer.

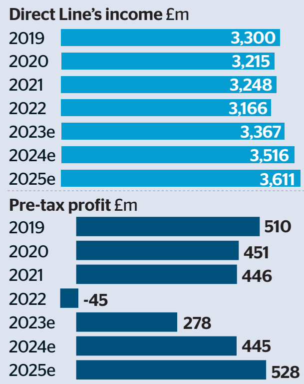
The group is now writing profitable motor business, according to Greenwood, equivalent to a 10 per cent net margin that puts the business back generating capital. But the impact of previous pricing decisions will not fully work through until 2025. Analysts think pre-tax profits next year will improve to £278 million, about half the pre-pandemic level. Even after a 16 per cent bump in the share price on the back of the brokered commercial sale, the shares trade at a marginal discount to its forecast book value in 12 months' time, a steep discount to Admiral at 6.8. Prudent reserving is one reason for the latter's premium. Pricing missteps and persistent inflation will curtail Direct Line's ability to release reserves.

Regulatory matters could yet deliver a surprise. It is undertaking two reviews for past mistakes. One relates to the way it implemented new rules intended to prevent insurers charging existing customers higher premiums for renewed motor and home insurance than equivalent new customers. The second goes back five years, where it underpaid some claims from customers whose cars were written off. The estimated combined cost is £70 million.

Securing the sale of the brokered commercial will meet one condition for the reinstatement of dividends. The second is returning the motor business to generating capital organically. Analysts think a 15.1p a share payment might be possible at final results. But coming good on the latter will depend on Direct Line demonstrating that it can maintain a grip on premiums.

Running for cover





ADVICE Hold
WHY A better capital position and weighty premium increases could help improve profitability

CURRYS

Market cap	Net debt
£541m	£97m

The Indian summer makes Christmas feel like an age away, but for retailers like Currys the peak trading season will prove a vital gauge of whether spending on big-ticket items is set for a rebound.

The most recent sales figures don't push the dial firmly enough. Like-for-like sales in the 17 weeks to the end of August declined 4 per cent. Admittedly that was better than the 7 per cent fall recorded over the past financial year.

Cost of living pressures are one thing, but some of Currys troubles are self-inflicted. Underestimating the competitive challenges in the Nordics has cost the electricals retailer dear. Like-for-like sales fell 8 per cent in the most recent 17 weeks. In the UK and Ireland, underlying sales fell back another 2 per cent.

Gross margins have improved in both regions, management says, but no timeline has been reinstated for hitting an adjusted operating margin target of 3 per cent, which had been set for 2025.

November's Black Friday sales and Christmas will be a better indication of whether the market is improving or if aggressive discounting is set to make a return. Cash burn last year tipped the group into a £97 million net debt position for the first time since 2020. Alex Baldock, Currys boss, is in cash preservation mode, aiming to cut capital expenditure by about a quarter this year to £80 million, which would take the two-year reduction to more than a third. The final dividend was also scrapped and it secured covenant relaxations until October next year.

The Greek business, which grew sales 3 per cent in the latest period, is up for review. A sale would provide a helpful infusion of cash.

The question is whether cost-cutting efforts will go far enough to offset sickly sales. Analysts have forecast another decline in adjusted pre-tax profits this year to £102 million, down from £119 million last year. After including impairment charges taken against the value of its assets, last year's pre-tax loss amounted to £450 million.

Investor confidence in Currys' earnings prospects is close to the lowest in at least ten years. The market is right to be sceptical that the retailer has done enough to engineer a turnaround.

ADVICE Avoid
WHY Cost cuts may not prove enough to offset weak sales

NEWS IN BRIEF

Games developer sale

Carlyle, the US private equity firm, is exploring the sale of one of the UK's biggest video games developers, in a deal that could be worth more than £1 billion. Founded in 2001, Jagex creates and operates online computer games — particularly one called RuneScape which has logged over three hundred million player accounts since it started. It employs 450 people in its Cambridge headquarters. It is understood that the sale process, first reported by the Financial Times, could start at the end of this year and last for six months.

Aldi's 1,000th store

Aldi UK marked its 1,000th store in Woking, Surrey, by raising its long-term target by 250 openings to 1,500. The German-controlled discount food retailer, whose first UK outlet was in Stechford, Birmingham, in 1990, is Britain's fourth largest supermarket group. It aims to open another 20 stores before the end of the year in a two-year £1.3 billion investment programme. Aldi and its low-cost rival Lidl's rapid growth has led Tesco and Sainsbury's to launch price-matching schemes.

FCA's crypto flexibility

The City regulator has offered crypto firms more time to meet tough new marketing rules on the industry that are due to come into force on October 8. The core rules will still take effect but the Financial Conduct Authority said firms could apply for flexibility to implement some of the changes. Lucy Castledine, FCA director of consumer investments, said the regulator was "concerned by the failure of many overseas and unregulated crypto firms to engage with us on the new rules".

Playtech earnings rise

Playtech reported record first-half earnings, putting it on track to deliver full-year results slightly ahead of expectations. The gambling technology group, which has been the subject of bid approaches, said the results reflected operational and strategic progress. Underlying adjusted earnings grew by 10 per cent to €219.9 million, with revenue up 8 per cent to €859.6 million. Shares in Playtech closed down 1p, or 0.2 per cent, at 523½p.

PRICES

Major indices

New York	
Dow Jones	34500.73 (+57.54)
Nasdaq Composite	13748.83 (-123.64)
S&P 500	4451.14 (-14.34)
Tokyo	
Nikkei 225	32991.08 (-249.94)
Hong Kong	
Hang Seng	18202.07 (-247.91)
Amsterdam	
AEX Index	739.71 (-5.72)
Sydney	
AO	7374.90 (-86.70)
Frankfurt	
DAX	15718.66 (-22.71)
Singapore	
Straits	3226.59 (+3.71)
Brussels	
BEL20	3645.47 (-27.82)
Paris	
CAC-40	7196.10 (+2.01)
Zurich	
SMI Index	10993.43 (+69.01)
DJ Euro Stoxx 50	4221.02 (-17.24)
London	
FTSE 100	7441.72 (+15.58)
FTSE 250	18383.85 (-67.97)
FTSE 350	4094.58 (+5.25)
FTSE Eurotop 100	3575.43 (+1.20)
FTSE All-Shares	4053.60 (+4.90)
FTSE Non Financials	4956.97 (+14.18)
techMARK 100	6303.63 (-17.70)
Bargains	n/a
US$	1.2475 (-0.0023)
Euro	1.1657 (+0.0003)
£:SDR	0.98 (+0.00)
Exchange Index	81.97 n/a
Bank of England official close (4pm)	
CPI	130.90 Jul (2015 = 100)
RPI	374.20 Jul (Jan 1987 = 100)
RPIX	290.10 Jun (Jan 1987 = 100)
Morningstar Long Commodity	677.16 (+5.72)
Morningstar Long/Short Commod	4703.45 (+27.75)

London Financial Futures

	Period	Open	High	Low	Sett	Vol	Open Int
Long Gilt	SEP 23	94.260	94.260	94.080	94.120	5	687
	Dec 23	93.820	94.520	93.780	94.220	170658	521084
3-Mth Sterling	Sep 23						
	Dec 23						
	Mar 24						
	Jun 24						
	Sep 24						
3-Mth Euribor	Sep 23	96.165	96.170	96.155	96.165	148818	630516
	Dec 23	96.110	96.115	96.100	96.110	118753	600297
	Mar 24	96.170	96.190	96.165	96.175	83265	524909
	Jun 24	96.320	96.355	96.320	96.335	72514	482600
	Sep 24	96.515	96.565	96.515	96.535	61724	215692
3-Mth Euroswiss	Sep 23						
	Dec 23						
	Mar 24						
	Jun 24						
FTSE100	Sep 23	7435.0	7470.5	7391.0	7449.5	110281	557726
	Dec 23	7455.0	7527.5	7451.5	7507.5	38632	5128
FTSEurofirst 80	Sep 23				5711.0		
	Dec 23				5737.5		

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Commodities

ICIS pricing (London 7.30pm)

Crude Oils ($/barrel FOB)

Brent Physical	91.21	-0.60
BFOE(Nov)	89.98	-0.68
BFOE(Dec)	89.34	-0.61
WTI(Nov)	86.15	-0.64
WTI(Dec)	85.32	-0.61

Products ($/MT)

Spot CIF NW Europe (prompt delivery)

Premium Unld	926.00	929.00	-70.00
Gasoil EEC	961.50	962.50	+15.75
3.5 Fuel Oil	555.00	555.00	+2.00
Naphtha	681.00	694.00	+4.00

ICE Futures

Gas Oil

Sep	946.00-945.75	Dec	867.25-867.00
Oct	930.00-929.75	Jan	852.25-851.50
Nov	900.25-900.00		Volume: 652441

Brent (9.00pm)

Nov	90.41-90.40	Feb	88.14-88.10
Dec	89.71-89.69	Mar	87.39-87.37
Jan	88.91-88.89		Volume: 1751123

LIFFE

Cocoa

Sep	2980-2966	Dec	2730-2696
Dec	2985-2982	Mar	2667-2598
Mar	2939-2933	May	2409-2588
May	2869-2865		
Jul	2830-2700		
Sep	2790-2679		Volume: 84796

RobustaCoffee

Sep	2640-2625	May	2273-2252
Nov	2410-2408	Jul	2284-2100
Jan	2326-2320		
Mar	2300-2265		Volume: 13259

White Sugar (FOB)

Reuters		May	704.80-701.60
		Aug	674.10-671.10
Oct	737.70-734.90	Oct	647.60-645.20
Dec	724.30-722.70	Dec	648.10-624.50
Mar	720.10-718.50		Volume: 77732

Profit and costs warnings breed discontent at Genus



Jessica Newman **Market report**

Genus's results may have come in higher than analysts' expectations, but they clearly were not enough to get investors on side as shares in the livestock genetics company dropped to a level not seen since 2017. Though total revenues rose 16 per cent to £689.7 million in the 12 months to the end of June, pre-tax profits slipped to £39.4 million from £48.4 million a year earlier as net costs more than doubled to £14.3 million due to higher interest rates.

Genus cautioned that both currency rates and higher interest rates would affect profits for 2024 as the strength of the pound was expected to lead to a currency headwind of between £5 million and £6 million, while finance costs were anticipated to rise by about £2 million as a result of the "higher interest environment".

Bosses didn't exactly sound optimistic about the recovery in China's porcine market either, which they reckon will continue to be "volatile". Analysts at Peel Hunt, which cut their pre-tax profit forecasts for 2024 by 8 per cent to £82.3 million, were bullish about the company's "strong strategic progress" despite headwinds taking "the gloss off the underlying performance". Investors saw more bad than good in the results, though, with the shares down 172p, or 7.7 per cent, to £20.62.

A sell-off of technology stocks on Wall Street weighed on most major European markets but the FTSE 100, buoyed by a weaker pound, managed to eke out a gain of 15.58 points, or 0.2 per cent, to 7,441.72 and halt a three-day losing streak. The more UK-focused FTSE 250 slipped 67.97 points, or 0.4 per cent, to 18,383.85.

Miners were among the biggest blue-chip fallers as disappointing trade data from China weakened sentiment towards the sector amid concerns over dwindling demand for metals. **Anglo American** fell by 60½p, or 2.9 per cent, to £20.25½; **Rio Tinto** by 131½p, or 2.6 per cent, to £48.47; and **Antofagasta** by 31p, or 2.1 per cent, to £14.65.

Prudential, the Asia-focused insurer, shed 25p, or 2.7 per cent, to 903½p as it went ex-dividend, while **Smurfit Kappa** dropped 122p, or 3.8 per cent, to £30.96 after confirming it was in talks to merge with an American rival.

Shares in **Synthomer** slumped by 16p, or 26 per cent, to 45p — a level not seen since 2009 — after the polymer maker revealed plans to raise £276 million through a rights issue to tackle its massive debt pile. Shares in **Safestore**, the self-storage company, slipped 57½p, or 6.7 per cent, to an 11-month low of 804p after bosses flagged "some softness in the UK's business customer segment". Investors took the update as a sign to ditch their shares in rivals such as **Big Yellow**, which gave back 31p, or 2.9 per cent, to £10.35. Solid updates from **Melrose** pushed shares in the former industrial conglomerate up 28¼p, or 5.5 per cent, to 537¼p, while **Direct Line** zoomed 24p, or 15.8 per cent, to 174p after the motor insurer said it had agreed to offloaded its brokered commercial insurance unit for £520 million.

Off the main market, **Directa Plus** bounced off five-year lows after the maker and supplier of graphene-based products revealed it had bagged a three-year contract with Liberty Galati, a Romanian steel producer, to provide a solution to treat oily mill scale produced in the manufacturing of steel. Its shares closed up 4½p, or 10.3 per cent, to 48p.

Elsewhere, a trebling in revenues to £1.2 million in the first half of the year, sent shares in blood biopsy supplier **Angle** up 3p, or 26.1 per cent, to 14½p.

Wall Street report

Markets were unsure which way to move as strong economic data overshadowed investors' fears that the Federal Reserve will raise rates in November. The Dow Jones industrial average rose by 57.54 points, or 0.2 per cent, to 34,500.73.

BANKING AND FINANCE

Beazley calms investor nerves

Shares in Beazley, the FTSE 100 insurer, wobbled for a while as analysts were taken aback by a seemingly worse than expected figure for underwriting success (Patrick Hosking writes).

The combined ratio, a measure of costs and claims as a percentage of premiums, came in at 84 per cent, worse than the 79 per cent pencilled in by analysts.

Despite record first-half profits of $366.4 million and reassuring statements from the company, the shares dived by as much as 9 per cent in the first few minutes of trading.



The insurer's shares recovered from an early 9 per cent dive

It was another example of analysts being wrongfooted by the effects of the new IFRS 17 accounting rules, which slow the rate at which insurers can book profits. Calm was restored when Beazley explained that it was sticking with its full-year guidance for the combined ratio under the old standard. The shares bounced to end the day at 538½p, only 2½p, or 0.5 per cent, down on the day.

Adrian Cox, chief executive, said he was still committed to expanding in cyber insurance, where the company chalked up premium growth of 14 per cent in the first half in spite of a 3 per cent fall in rates. He said that cyber had "exciting" long-term growth prospects.



FRED DUFOUR/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Apple shares hit by China iPhone 'ban'

Apple has suffered its worst two-day stock market decline since last November after reports that Beijing was set to ban Chinese government officials from using the iPhone.

Shares in the US technology group, which fleetingly became the world's first $3 trillion public company this summer, pulled Wall Street lower yesterday.

Most Apple devices are made in China, where almost a fifth of Apple's revenue is generated. Tim Cook, chief executive, has called its relationship with the country "symbiotic".

Shares in Apple fell by 3 per cent, or $5.35, to close at $177.56 in New York, giving it a market value of $2.8 trillion.

"Over the last five years China has consistently been 15 to 20 per cent of revenue," Scott Kessler, global sector lead at Third Bridge, said. "If there was any kind of demand impact related to China, that would definitely have an influence on the company's results."

Based in Cupertino, California, Apple is the world's largest public company, ahead of Microsoft and Saudi Aramco.

The South China Morning Post said that "a handful" of Chinese ministries had told staff to stop using iPhones at work, citing national security risks. The Wall Street Journal reported that central government agencies had been told not to use foreign-branded devices for work, including iPhones.

"We're talking about speculation," Kessler said. "The reports would suggest you're talking a very specific and small group."

The day's biggest movers

Company	Change
Direct Line Sale of brokered commercial insurance unit overshadows losses	15.8%
Darktrace Panmure Gordon repeats "buy" rating	6.5%
Melrose Industries Raises profit outlook	5.5%
Rolls-Royce Holdings Positive read-across from Melrose	4.2%
Hilton Food Group Upbeat half-year results	1.0%
Smurfit Kappa In $20 billion merger talks with WestRock	-3.8%
Safestore Holdings Flags softening demand in the UK	-6.7%
Genus Disappointing outlook	-7.7%
Pets at Home CMA launches review of veterinary industry	-9.4%
Synthomer Falls on £276 million rights issue	-26.0%

London Grain Futures

LIFFE Wheat (close £/t)

Nov	186.75	Jan	unq	Mar	unq
May	198.00	Jul	unq	Volume: 1764	

London Metal Exchange

(Official)

Cash	3mth	Dec 22
Copper Gde A ($/tonne)		
8242.0-8242.5	8265.0-8270.0	8355.0-8365.0
Lead ($/tonne)		
2285.0-2287.0	2231.5-2232.5	2237.0-2242.0
Zinc Spec Hi Gde ($/tonne)		
2428.0-2428.5	2448.0-2450.0	2480.0-2485.0
Alum Hi Gde ($/tonne)		
2134.5-2135.0	2178.0-2180.0	2323.0-2328.0
Nickel ($/tonne)		
20125.0-20130.0	20300.0-20310.0	21400.0-21450.0
Tin ($/tonne)		**15mth**
25675.0-25725.0	25725.0-25775.0	25355.0-25405.0

Gold/Precious metals (US dollars per ounce)

Because of a technical issue, the gold fix prices are from Wednesday.

Bullion: Open $1916.97

Close $1919.86-1920.06 **High** $1923.36

Low $1916.26

AM $1923.45 **PM** $1922.05

Platinum $ (£)

Silver $22.98 (£18.42)

Palladium $ (£)

European money deposits %

Currency	1mth	3mth	6mth	12mth
Dollar	0.13	0.20	0.29	0.55
Sterling	4.20	5.58	4.74	0.81
Euro	0.10	0.15	0.20	0.50

Money rates %

Base Rates Clearing Banks 5.25 ECB Refi 4.25 US Fed Fund 5.25-5.50

Halifax Mortgage Rate (SVR) 8.74

Sterling spot and forward rates

Mkt Rates for	Range	Close	1 month	3 month
Copenhagen	8.6718-8.7000	8.6920-8.6933	148ds	458ds
Euro	1.1665-1.1628	1.1654-1.1653	12pr	37pr
Montreal	1.6972-1.7091	1.7078-1.7079	6ds	21ds
New York	1.2447-1.2507	1.2478-1.2479	1pr	2pr
Oslo	13.336-13.407	13.354-13.361	108ds	316ds
Stockholm	13.838-13.905	13.883-13.887	200ds	571ds
Tokyo	183.39-184.75	183.53-183.55	87ds	264ds
Zurich	1.1110-1.1150	1.1138-1.1140	35ds	107ds

Premium = pr Discount = ds

Dollar rates

Australia	1.5667-1.5668
Canada	1.3686-1.3687
Denmark	6.9656-6.9663
Euro	0.9338-0.9339
Hong Kong	7.8391-7.8392
Japan	147.08-147.09
Malaysia	4.6720-4.6760
Norway	10.702-10.708
Singapore	1.3646-1.3647
Sweden	11.123-11.132
Switzerland	0.8925-0.8929

Other Sterling

Argentina peso	436.69-436.70
Australia dollar	1.9550-1.9551
Bahrain dinar	0.4671-0.4741
Brazil real	6.2096-6.2133
Euro	1.1650-1.1656
Hong Kong dollar	9.7814-9.7825
India rupee	103.77-103.78
Indonesia rupiah	19141-19142
Kuwait dinar KD	0.3837-0.3860
Malaysia ringgit	5.8256-5.8306
New Zealand dollar	2.1206-2.1210
Singapore dollar	1.7027-1.7030
S Africa rand	23.904-23.915
U A E dirham	4.5746-4.5748

Exchange rates

	Bid	Change
Australia $	1.957	
Canada $	1.705	
Denmark Kr	8.693	
Euro €	1.166	
Hong Kong $	9.782	-0.01
Hungary	451.471	-2.62
Indonesia	19121.115	+20.77
Israel Shk	4.797	+0.02
Japan Yen	183.532	-0.86
New Zealand $	2.121	-0.01
Norway Kr	13.365	-0.05
Poland	5.384	+0.05
Russia	122.837	+0.18
S Africa Rd	23.917	-0.13
Sweden Kr	13.897	-0.01
Switzerland Fr	1.114	
Turkey Lira	33.488	-0.01
USA $	1.248	

Rates supplied by Morningstar

MORNINGSTAR Data as shown is for information purposes only. No offer is made by Morningstar or this publication

SAVE £50 ON THE VAX PLATINUM SMARTWASH RANGE TODAY!

VAX PLATINUM

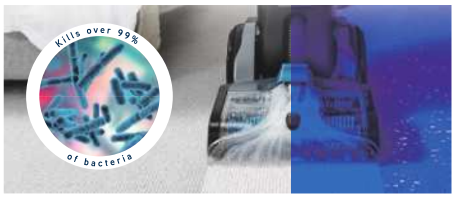
SMARTWASH RANGE

The UK's first carpet washer range with motion sense technology, that kills over 99% of bacteria.*

The smart solution to a deep clean, the VAX Platinum SmartWash cleans better than the UK's leading rental^Δ and leaves carpets dry in just 1 hour.†



FREE STEAMER (WORTH £49.99) | **FREE NEXT DAY DELIVERY WITH DPD** | **6 YEAR GUARANTEE**



Antibacterial Clean

There's nothing better than a home that's full of life, but often, there's a different kind of life deep in your carpets that can't be removed by vacuuming alone. That's why the smart solution is to use the VAX Platinum SmartWash carpet washer - together with VAX antibacterial solution, the VAX Platinum SmartWash kills over 99% of bacteria* leaving your carpets looking clean and smelling fresh.



Clean with Ease

To get cleaning, all you need to do is add water and solution - Platinum SmartWash does the rest. FlexForce brushbars deliver powerful cleaning force to shift spills and lift stains, for a deep clean that's just as easy as vacuuming, but 7 times more effective^Δ. When you're done, simply lift out the dirty water tank and pour away. The brushbars are also easily removed, meaning maintenance is simple and SmartWash is kept performing at its best.



Motion Sense Technology

The VAX Platinum SmartWash is the UK's first carpet washer with Motion Sense technology; there's no trigger, it automatically washes and dispenses clean water and solution when you push forward and dries when you pull back - meaning it's effortlessly simple to use, and with the dry only mode, it helps dry your carpets in as little as an hour.



Clean More Than Carpets

The VAX Platinum SmartWash's sleek design ensures it is easy to manoeuvre throughout the home. Including a stretch hose, SpinScrub hand tool and 2-in-1 antimicrobial wash tool, the Platinum SmartWash can be used to deep clean and tackle stains on stairs, upholstery, pet beds and even the car. Save £50 on the VAX Platinum SmartWash today, Now £249.99 ~~was £299.99.~~

SAVE £50 ACROSS THE RANGE!

VAX PLATINUM

SMARTWASH PET-DESIGN

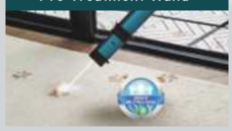
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PET DESIGN



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Pre Treatment Wand



SpinScrub Hand Tool



FREE STEAMER

FREE with the VAX Platinum SmartWash range when purchased at vax.co.uk.



Worth £49.99

† When using dry only mode. Δ Cleaning effectiveness on carpet, tested according to IEC 62885-3:2014 part 5.2.1. For further information email claimsinfo@VAX.co.uk.* When used with VAX Platinum Antibacterial solution, use biocides safely, always read the label & product information before use. See vax.co.uk for delivery options. Free steamer worth £49.99 available on direct purchases of Platinum SmartWash and Platinum SmartWash Pet-Design.

VAXUK2874

ORDER TODAY FROM ONLY £249.99 + SAVE £50

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PayPal Klarna.

PAYMENT OPTIONS AVAILABLE

ALLIANZ GLOBAL INVESTORS
Inv Serv: 020 7065 1400 Helpline: 0800 317 573

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Gilt Yield A ‡@	206.01	...	+0.27	1.05
Strategic Bond Fund ‡@	135.94	...	-0.57	...
UK Corp Bond C ‡@	104.79	...	-0.78	3.87
UK Eqty C ‡@	6317.26	...	-14.91	...
UK Eqty Inc A ‡@	298.27	...	+1.61	4.75
UK Gwth A ‡@	7600.95	...	+26.28	...
UK Index A Inc ‡@	1423.81	...	-5.83	...
UK Mid Cap A ‡@	4654.61	...	-11.35	...

ARTEMIS FUND MGRS LTD
0800 092 2051
Authorised Inv Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Capital R Acc ‡@	2116.64	...	+9.68	...
Euro Opps R Acc ‡@	91.26	...	-0.48	...
Euro Opps R Inc ‡@	85.36	...	-0.46	...
European Growth R Acc ‡@	418.60	...	+2.41	1.77
Global Energy R Acc ‡@	39.04	...	-0.07	...
Global Growth R Acc ‡@	344.84	...	+2.31	...
Global Income R Acc ‡@	161.14	...	+0.94	...
Global Income R Inc ‡@	99.08	...	+0.58	...
Global Select R Acc ‡@	152.66	...	+0.04	...
High Income R Inc ‡@	61.13	...	+0.07	6.46
Income R Acc ‡@	503.80	...	+4.81	3.97
Income R Inc ‡@	216.26	...	+2.06	4.09
Monthly Dist R Inc ‡@	62.84	...	+0.17	5.05
Strategic Assets R Acc ‡@	89.48	...	-0.34	...
Strategic Bond R M Acc ‡@	94.45	...	+0.10	3.97
Strategic Bond R M Inc ‡@	48.59	...	+0.05	4.07
Strategic Bond R Q Acc ‡@	94.28	...	+0.10	4.07
Strategic Bond R Q Inc ‡@	48.35	...	+0.06	4.15
UK Growth R Acc ‡@	728.20	...	+6.20	2.13
UK Smaller Cos R Acc ‡@	1768.52	...	+9.03	1.54
UK Special Sits R Acc ‡@	701.67	...	+4.34	...

AXA FRAMLINGTON UNIT MGMT LTD
Dling: 0845 602 1952 Priv Clients: 0845 777 5511

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Equity Inc ‡@	572.40	...	-2.70	4.43
Gilt Acc @	201.30	211.80	+0.10	1.08
Gilt Inc @	74.35	78.24	-0.39	1.09
Health Acc ‡@	3018.00	...	+24.00	...
Jap Smlr Co Ac @	62.56	66.09	-0.19	0.30
Managed Inc ‡@	138.30	...	...	4.20
Monthly Inc Inc ‡@	201.20	...	+0.40	...
UK Growth Inc ‡@	205.50	...	-0.50	...
UK Select Opps Inc ‡@	1802.00	...	+10.00	...
UK Sml Cos Inc ‡@	247.60	...	-2.20	...

AXA FUND MANAGERS LTD
Admin & Enq 0117 989 0808
AXA Trusts

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Gen Acc ‡@	2101.00	...	+6.00	...
Gen Inc ‡@	1079.00	...	-2.00	...

UK/Global Investment Companies

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Euro Acc A ‡@	234.70	...	...	...
Extra Inc Inc B ‡@	86.74	...	+0.24	1.16
Global Gwth Acc R ‡@	288.10	...	+4.10	0.52
Japan Acc A ‡@	162.30	...	+2.20	1.51
Pac Gwth Acc A ‡@	479.80	...	-17.60	2.30

CIS UNIT MANAGERS LTD
08457 46 46 46

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
European Gwth ‡@	207.90	...	+1.10	1.69
Sus Leaders ‡@	769.60	...	+6.50	...
UK Growth ‡@	606.20	...	+5.40	...
UK Income ‡@	198.50	...	+1.20	5.04

CLOSE FUND MANAGEMENT LTD
0870 606 6402

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Beacon Inv ‡	84.88	...	+0.35	...

Dealing: 020 7426 6232

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Winchester ‡	3681.93	...	+18.40	0.99

COLUMBIA THREADNEEDLE INVESTMENTS
Enqs: 0870 601 6183 Dealing: 0870 601 6083
Share Class 1 - Retail

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Corporate Bd ‡@	49.99	...	-0.31	1.57
Emerging Mkts ‡@	116.50	...	-0.50	...
Euro Gwth & Inc 1 ‡@	1238.00	...	-3.00	...
Extra Inc Bond ‡@	43.59	...	...	1.78
FTSE All-Shr Track ‡@	416.90	...	+3.40	...
Global Gwth SC1 ‡@	304.70	...	+0.50	...
High Inc Trst @	11.12	11.72	+0.03	5.41
Max Inc Bond ‡@	43.02	...	-0.04	3.90
Multi Man Caut ‡@	70.41	...	...	3.18
Multi Man Distr ‡@	60.44	...	...	3.37
North Amer ‡@	891.40	...	+2.40	...
Pacific Gwth ‡@	465.60	...	-0.20	0.04
Strategic Bd ‡@	193.00	...	...	1.33
UK Equity ‡@	3446.00	...	+2.00	...
UK Gwth & Inc Acc 1 ‡@	658.50	...	...	...
UK Gwth & Inc Dist ‡@	234.70	...	...	...
UK Smaller Cos ‡@	961.50	...	-3.00	0.20

EDENTREE INV MGMT LTD
0800 358 3010

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Resp & Sust Sterling Bond ‡	82.29	...	+0.26	4.33
Resp & Sust Eurp Eq ‡	325.30	...	+2.70	2.06
Resp & Sust Glbl Eq ‡	338.20	...	+1.60	...
Resp & Sust Mgd Income ‡	116.30	...	+1.10	5.13
Resp & Sust UK Eq ‡	212.90	...	+0.90	...
Resp & Sust UK Equity Opps ‡	267.20	...	+1.10	...

FIDELITY INTERNATIONAL
Private Clnts 0800 414161 Broker Dlgs 0800 414181

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Amer Spec Sits ‡@	2306.00	...	+15.00	...
American ‡@	5682.00	...	+24.00	...
Euro Opps ‡@	567.40	...	+1.80	...
European ‡@	3493.00	...	+15.00	0.83
Extra Income ‡@	21.73	...	+0.03	6.06
Glob Spec Sits ‡@	5646.00	...	+11.00	...
Global Focus ‡@	2938.00	...	+8.00	...
International ‡@	149.50	...	+0.20	0.08
Japan ‡@	604.30	...	+2.20	0.74
Moneybldr Bal ‡@	41.39	...	+0.32	4.16
Moneybldr Glob	327.60	327.60	-0.10	0.21
Moneybldr Gwth ‡@	76.12	...	-0.95	...
Moneybldr Inc ‡@	28.01	...	+0.10	4.99
Moneybldr UK Ind ‡@	128.24	...	+0.98	...
Special Sits ‡@	4435.00	...	+31.00	...
Wealthbuilder	69.75	72.18	+0.53	...

HALIFAX INVESTMENT FUND MGRS LTD
01296 386 386
Authorised Inv Funds
Share Class `C

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Corporate Bond ‡@	31.58	...	+0.11	3.51
Ethical ‡@	114.10	...	-0.10	...
European ‡@	112.50	...	+0.60	1.94
Far Eastern ‡	111.70	...	...	3.42
Fund of Inv Tst ‡@	135.80	...	+0.60	...
Intl Gwth ‡	132.40	...	+0.20	...
Japanese ‡	76.30	...	+0.18	1.41
North Amer ‡	161.40	...	+0.20	0.35
Smaller Cos ‡@	100.80	...	...	1.62
Special Sits ‡@	48.48	...	+0.27	...
UK Equity Inc ‡@	90.16	...	+0.81	3.99
UK FTSE 100 IT ‡@	69.99	...	+0.66	...
UK FTSE All-S IT ‡@	78.55	...	+0.66	...
UK Growth ‡@	82.15	...	+0.73	...

HSBC GLOBAL ASSET MGMT (UK) LTD
Enq: 0845 745 6123 Dlg: 0845 745 6126 Mon-Fri 8-6
HSBC Index Tracker Investment Funds (OEIC)

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Amer Ind Acc ‡@	995.54	...	-4.64	1.24
Amer Ind Inc ‡@	789.03	...	-3.68	2.45
Euro Ind Acc ‡@	1192.31	...	-9.04	2.63
Euro Ind Inc ‡@	742.70	...	-5.64	2.70
FTSE 100 Ind Acc ‡@	274.52	...	-2.76	...
FTSE 100 Ind Inc ‡@	122.60	...	-1.23	...
FTSE 250 Ind Acc ‡@	279.60	...	-1.83	3.62
FTSE 250 Ind Inc ‡@	166.49	...	-1.09	3.07
FTSE All-S Acc ‡@	696.87	...	-6.58	...
FTSE All-S Inc ‡@	346.24	...	-3.27	...
Jap Ind Acc ‡@	151.84	...	+1.52	1.88
Jap Ind Inc ‡@	116.07	...	+1.16	1.92
Pac Ind Acc ‡@	492.27	...	-0.88	3.48
Pac Ind Inc ‡@	298.98	...	-0.53	3.61

HSBC Investment Funds (OEIC) - Retail Share Class

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Balanced Acc ‡@	244.07	...	-1.12	1.19
Balanced Inc ‡@	151.95	...	-0.14	...
Corp Bd Acc ‡@	261.16	...	-0.59	5.12
Corp Bd Inc ‡@	99.47	...	-0.22	3.56
Gilt & Fd Int Acc ‡@	497.78	...	+1.62	...
Gilt & Fd Int Inc ‡@	74.17	...	+0.24	...
Income Acc ‡@	699.18	...	-6.53	4.20
Income Inc ‡@	280.28	...	-2.62	4.34
Monthly Inc Acc ‡@	313.41	...	+0.77	3.21
Monthly Inc Inc ‡@	123.76	...	-0.88	4.09
UK Grth & Inc Ret B Acc ‡@	142.61	...	-1.29	...
UK Grth & Inc Ret B Inc ‡@	61.57	...	-0.56	...
UK Gth & Inc Acc ‡@	142.61	...	-1.29	...
UK Gth & Inc Inc ‡@	61.57	...	-0.56	...

HSBC Specialist Investment Funds (OEIC)

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
American Index Retail Acc ‡@	995.54	...	-4.64	1.24
American Index Retail Inc ‡@	789.03	...	-3.68	2.45
Asian Gth Acc ‡@	147.77	...	-0.07	...
Asian Gth Inc ‡@	130.99	...	-0.06	...
Chinese Eq Acc ‡@	513.81	...	+0.27	0.40
Chinese Eq Inc ‡@	434.76	...	+0.22	0.34
Euro Gth Acc ‡@	973.97	...	+4.05	...
Euro Gth Inc ‡@	817.05	...	+3.39	...

IGNIS ASSET MGMT
Dlg: 0141 222 8282

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
American Gth Inc @	322.55	340.42	-3.34	...
Balanced Growth @	262.17	276.69	-0.93	...
Balanced Growth Acc @	393.13	414.92	-1.40	...
Corporate Bond ‡@	99.69	...	-0.89	4.77
European Growth @	403.88	426.26	-3.57	...
European Growth Acc @	475.71	502.07	-4.21	...
Glob Gwth @	331.53	349.90	-3.09	0.12
Higher Yield @	83.98	88.64	-0.29	4.43
Higher Yield Acc @	275.04	290.28	-0.92	...
Japan @	49.06	51.78	-0.03	...
Managed @	130.89	138.15	-0.06	0.66
Managed Trust @	71.96	76.96	+0.17	...
Mngd Pfolio Inc @	95.54	100.84	-0.11	...
Pacific Grth @	498.71	526.34	-2.81	1.34
Smaller Comp @	756.24	798.14	+1.64	...
Smaller Cos @	628.94	663.79	+1.36	...

INSIGHT INVESTMENT FDS MANAGEMENT LTD
Client Servs: 0207 163 4000
Insight Investment Multi-Manager Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Well Bldr Bal Acc ‡@	96.05	...	-0.32	...
Well Bldr Gwth Acc ‡@	93.79	...	-0.36	...

INVESCO FUND MGRS LTD
Dling: 0800 085 8571 Inv Serv: 0800 085 8677
Brkr Serv: 0800 028 2121
INVESCO Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
UK Str Inc N/Trl ‡@	323.57	...	-0.12	...

INVESCO PERPETUAL Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Childrens Acc ‡@	455.28	...	+3.44	2.32
Corp Bond Acc ‡@	195.86	...	+0.77	3.23
High Income Inc ‡@	307.53	...	+2.38	4.06
Income & Grth Inc ‡@	402.53	...	+0.78	3.32
Income Inc ‡@	1216.28	...	+3.37	3.60
Money Acc ‡@	94.40	...	+0.03	...
Monthly Inc Plus Inc ‡@	89.41	...	+0.18	6.27
UK Aggressive Inc ‡@	154.28	...	-0.24	...
UK Growth Acc ‡@	898.48	...	+7.32	...
UK Sml Cos Eqty Acc ‡@	1251.17	...	-8.05	...
UK Sml Cos Gwth ‡@	82.54	...	+0.04	...

INVESTEC FUND MGRS
Broker Support and Dealing: 020 7597 1900
OEIC Series i,ii,iii, & iv

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
American A Acc ‡@	752.86	...	+2.41	...
Asia ex Japan A Acc ‡@	700.34	...	-2.34	...
Capital Accumulator A Acc ‡@	231.48	...	-3.81	...
Cautious Managed A Acc ‡@	370.70	...	+0.08	1.91
Cautious Managed A Inc ‡@	230.70	...	+0.05	1.93
Diversified Growth A Acc ‡@	122.35	...	-0.55	0.51
Diversified Growth A Inc ‡@	128.92	...	-0.58	0.01
Diversified Income A Acc ‡@	320.18	...	-0.06	2.89
Diversified Income A Inc ‡@	66.50	...	-0.02	4.32
Emerging Mkts Blended Debt A Acc ‡@	113.86	...	+0.16	...
Emerging Mkts Blended Debt A Acc Gross ‡@	125.82	...	+0.20	...
Emerging Mkts Blended Debt A Inc ‡@	63.09	...	+0.08	...
Emerging Mkts Equity A Acc ‡@	146.05	...	+0.09	...
Emrg Mkts Local Curr Debt A Acc ‡@	184.47	...	+0.64	5.12
Emrg Mkts Local Curr Debt A Inc ‡@	68.95	...	+0.23	7.00
Emrg Mkts Local Curr Debt Gross I Acc ‡@	220.49	...	-0.05	5.42
Enhanced Natural Resources A Acc ‡@	134.24	...	-1.25	...
Global Bond A Acc ‡@	139.30	...	+4.03	0.82
Global Bond A Inc ‡@	109.33	...	+3.00	0.82
Global Bond I Gross Inc ‡@	1167.00	...	+29.78	1.25
Global Dynamic A Acc ‡@	193.61	...	+1.95	0.47
Global Energy A Acc ‡@	170.97	...	-1.14	...
Global Equity A Acc ‡@	236.07	...	+1.24	0.13
Global Franchise A Acc ‡@	319.56	...	+0.86	...
Global Free Enterprise A Acc ‡@	1295.12	...	+1.20	...
Global Gold A Acc ‡@	177.73	...	+0.43	0.92
Global Special Situations A Acc ‡@	342.52	...	+2.78	...
Global Special Situations A Inc ‡@	264.42	...	+2.16	0.21
Managed Growth A Acc ‡@	263.21	...	-1.59	...
Monthly High Income A Acc ‡@	243.45	...	+0.43	3.54
Monthly High Income A Inc ‡@	63.17	...	+0.01	5.01
Multi-Asset Protector A Acc ‡@	166.90	...	-0.09	0.92
Strategic Bond A Acc ‡@	244.54	...	+0.19	1.96
Strategic Bond A Inc ‡@	119.47	...	+0.09	3.32
Target Return A Acc ‡@	102.03	...	+0.44	0.82
Target Return A Inc ‡@	87.63	...	+0.01	0.87
UK Alpha A Acc ‡@	2642.15	...	+19.39	...
UK Blue Chip A Acc ‡@	770.11	...	+3.15	...
UK Smaller Companies A Acc ‡@	4310.58	...	+1.64	...
UK Smaller Companies A Inc ‡@	3866.30	...	+1.47	...
UK Special Situations A Acc ‡@	1437.82	...	+17.24	...
UK Special Situations A Inc ‡@	515.42	...	+6.19	...

For ISIS Asset Mgmt see F&C Fd Mgmt Ltd (OEICS)

JANUS HENDERSON INVESTORS
Investors Serv: 0800 832 832 Dlng: 0845 946 4646

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
All Stks Credit A Inc ‡@	109.80	...	+0.40	2.50
Asian Div Inc U Trst Inc ‡@	73.65	...	-0.07	5.88
Cautious Man Fd A Acc ‡@	276.90	...	+1.40	3.25
Cautious Man Fd A Inc ‡@	134.10	...	+0.70	3.31
China Opp Fund A Acc ‡@	1066.00	...	-7.00	0.30
Emg Mkts Opps Fd A Acc ‡@	191.20	...	...	0.77
Erpn Grth Fund A Acc ‡@	300.00	...	+0.90	1.16
Erpn Sel Opps Fd A Acc ‡@	2327.00	...	+5.00	0.86
Fix Int Mnthly Inc Fd Acc ‡@	27.66	...	-0.06	4.50
Global Equity Fund Acc ‡@	4312.00	...	+4.00	...
Global Equity Income A Inc ‡@	64.24	...	+0.47	3.34
Global Tech A Acc ‡@	3381.00	...	-7.00	...
Instl UK Idx Opps A Acc ‡@	113.34	...	+0.89	2.96
M-Asset Abs Ret A Acc ‡@	161.20	...	+0.10	0.82
M-Man Active Fd A Acc ‡@	257.30	...	...	...
M-Man Inc Grth A Inc ‡@	142.70	...	-0.10	3.27
M-Man Inc Grth Fd A Acc ‡@	186.80	...	-0.20	3.14
Sterling Bond U Trst Acc ‡@	198.60	...	+0.70	2.20
Sterling Bond U Trst Inc ‡@	53.56	...	+0.20	2.23
Strategic Bond A Inc ‡@	96.84	...	-0.05	3.18
UK Abs Ret Fd A Acc ‡@	171.80	...	+0.50	0.65
UK Alpha Fund A Acc ‡@	131.00	...	+0.20	...



	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
UK Irsh Sm Co Fd A Acc ‡@	742.50	...	-1.70	...
UK Property A Acc @	264.95	278.15	+0.01	...
UK Property A Inc @	105.80	111.07	...	...
US Growth Fund A Acc ‡@	1908.00	...	-1.00	...

JP MORGAN ASSET MGMT
OEIC

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Asia A Acc ‡@	259.00	...	+2.20	...
Emerging Mkts ‡@	261.50	...	+3.00	...
Eur Dyn (ex-UK) A Acc ‡@	270.30	...	+4.70	...
Euro Smllr Cos ‡@	864.00	...	+17.40	...
Europe A Acc ‡@	1734.00	...	+35.00	...
Gbl Hi Yld Bd A Acc ‡@	117.30	...	+1.10	5.30
Gbl Hi Yld Bd A Inc ‡@	30.89	...	+0.29	5.45
Gl ex-UK Bd A Acc ‡@	257.40	...	-0.70	...
Gl ex-UK Bd A Inc ‡@	196.80	...	-0.50	...
Glb Fins A Acc ‡@	1077.00	...	+1.00	...
Global A Acc ‡@	2049.00	...	+11.00	...
Japan A Acc ‡@	516.80	...	+6.20	...
Multi-Man Tst A Acc ‡@	1268.00	...	+16.00	...
Multi-Man Tst A Inc ‡@	1127.00	...	+15.00	...
Nat Resources ‡@	951.20	...	+17.30	...
New Europe A ‡@	155.70	...	+12.00	2.11
Portfolio ‡@	295.60	...	+0.40	0.98
Stg Corp Bd A Acc ‡@	85.59	...	-0.13	1.14
Stg Corp Bd A Inc ‡@	48.30	...	-0.08	1.14
UK Act 350 A Acc ‡@	199.00	...	-2.20	...
UK Dynamic Acc ‡@	206.70	...	+4.30	...
UK Dynamic Inc ‡@	148.20	...	+3.10	...
UK Equity A Acc ‡@	401.90	...	+0.60	...
UK Equity A Inc ‡@	46.44	...	+0.07	...
UK Eqy & Bd Inc Acc ‡@	167.10	...	-0.20	3.41
UK Eqy & Bd Inc Inc ‡@	90.29	...	-0.48	3.50
UK Higher Inc A Acc ‡@	1132.00	...	+7.00	...
UK Higher Inc A Inc ‡@	531.30	...	+2.00	...
UK Sm Cos A Acc ‡@	563.30	...	+7.00	0.34
UK Str Eq Inc A Acc ‡@	197.90	...	+3.50	...
UK Str Eq Inc A Inc ‡@	100.50	...	+1.77	...
US A Acc ‡@	1036.00	...	+25.00	...
US Sm Cos A Acc ‡@	976.20	...	+14.00	...

JUPITER UT MGRS LTD
020 7581 3020

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Absolute Return ‡@	31.70	...	-0.01	...
Distribution and Growth ‡@	96.93	...	-0.35	2.67
Emg Euro Opps ‡@	145.34	...	-31.23	...
Euro Special Sits ‡@	450.66	...	-0.50	...
European ‡@	2917.60	...	-1.63	...
Financial Opps ‡@	715.76	...	+2.46	1.13
Income Trust ‡@	488.07	...	+3.88	4.59
Merlin Bal (Acc) ‡@	231.77	...	-0.78	3.65
Merlin Gwth (Acc) ‡@	553.10	...	-1.92	...
Merlin Inc (Acc) ‡@	339.03	...	-0.96	3.12
Merlin Wwide (Inc) ‡@	394.84	...	-1.00	...
UK Growth ‡@	254.29	...	+2.89	0.89
UK Special Sits (Inc) ‡@	206.42	...	+1.75	...

LEGAL & GENERAL (UT MGRS) LTD
Enquiries: 0870 050 0955 Dealing: 0870 050 0956

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Equity Acc @	2616.00	2639.00	-8.00	...
Equity Dist @	893.80	902.00	-2.70	...
Euro Ind Acc ‡@	530.80	...	+2.30	...
Euro Ind Inc ‡@	339.50	...	+1.50	...
Fixed Int Acc ‡@	128.00	...	+0.40	2.62
Fixed Int Dist ‡@	58.78	...	+0.22	2.65
Glob Gwth Acc @	243.90	243.90	-1.30	1.15
Glob Health Acc ‡@	107.70	...	-1.20	0.83
Glob Tech Acc ‡@	110.20	...	+1.00	0.04
Gwth Tst Acc @	106.00	106.50	-1.00	...
High Inc Acc ‡@	124.50	...	-0.60	5.57
Japan Ind Acc ‡@	74.18	...	+0.23	1.68
Pacific Ind Acc ‡@	196.40	...	-0.30	3.09
UK 100 Ind Acc @	180.90	180.90	+0.90	...
UK Active Opps Acc @	249.90	252.90	-0.10	...
UK Index Acc ‡@	343.60	...	+2.60	...
UK Index Dist ‡@	163.20	...	+1.20	...
US Ind Acc ‡@	874.10	...	+1.00	0.86
Worldwide Acc ‡@	338.40	...	+0.30	0.80

M & G SECURITIES
Enq: 0800 390 390 Dealing Line: 0800 328 3196
Authorised Inv Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Charifund Inc ‡	1385.67	...	+10.43	6.08

Sterling Class A Investment Funds 1

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Euro Smlr Cos Acc ‡	525.29	...	-3.39	...
Euro Smlr Cos Inc ‡	462.50	...	-3.00	...

Sterling Class A Investment Funds 2

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Extra Income Inc ‡	646.14	...	+4.15	5.90
Gilt & Fxd Int Inc ‡	71.09	...	+0.43	3.28
Gl Hi Yd Bd Inc ‡	38.84	...	-0.04	5.90
Index Linked Bd Inc ‡	107.14	...	+0.58	...
Index Trckr Inc ‡	74.19	...	+0.59	...
Short Dated Corp Bd Inc ‡	24.69	...	+0.01	3.48
UK Select A Inc ‡	2655.77	...	+12.89	...

Sterling Class A Investment Funds 3

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Corp Bd A Inc ‡	32.56	...	+0.13	4.34
Dividend Inc ‡	48.89	...	+0.37	6.47
Recovery A Inc ‡	102.63	...	+0.92	...
Sml Cos Inc ‡	315.46	...	-0.74	2.73

Sterling Class A Investment Funds 4

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Episode Allocation A Inc ‡@	137.87	...	+0.15	...

MARKS & SPENCER UNIT TRUST LTD
0808 005 5555

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
High Income	84.10	84.10	-0.30	4.60
High Income Acc	241.20	241.20	-0.80	4.47
UK 100 Comp Acc @	453.90	453.90	-0.90	2.98
UK 100 Cos @	218.10	218.10	-0.40	3.05
UK Select Pflo @	328.80	328.80	-0.70	3.29
UK Selection Port Acc @	691.90	691.90	-1.40	3.63
Worldwide Mgd Acc @	949.00	949.00	-1.50	1.54
Wwide Mgd @	549.50	549.50	-0.90	0.56

MORGAN STANLEY INVESTMENT MGMT LTD
Enquires: 0800 0961 962
The Morgan Stanley Funds (UK)
Class A Shares
Equity

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Dev Opp Fund F Acc ‡@	785.14	...	-3.23	...
Dev Opp Fund I Acc ‡@	780.27	...	-3.21	...
Glob Bal Inc F F Acc ‡@	938.56	...	-0.72	4.29
Glob Bal Inc F F Inc ‡@	853.33	...	-0.66	4.42
Glob Bal Inc F I Acc ‡@	936.80	...	-0.72	4.29
Glob Bal Inc F I Inc ‡@	851.73	...	-0.66	4.42
Glob Bal Sust F F Acc ‡@	940.46	...	-0.04	1.80
Glob Bal Sust F F Inc ‡@	913.74	...	-0.03	1.82
Glob Bal Sust F I Acc ‡@	938.93	...	-0.03	1.74
Glob Bal Sust F I Inc ‡@	913.46	...	-0.04	1.74
Glob Br Eq Inc Fund F Inc ‡@	1327.63	...	+5.76	4.02
Glob Br Eq Inc Fund I Acc ‡@	1869.93	...	+8.10	3.99
Glob Br Eq Inc Fund I Inc ‡@	1418.19	...	+6.14	4.10
Glob Br Fund I Acc (PH) ‡@	1630.79	...	-4.28	0.74
Glob Br Fund I Acc (PH) ‡@	14073.97	...	+53.25	0.76
Glob Br Fund I Inc (PH) ‡@	1550.67	...	-4.07	0.75
Glob Br Fund I Inc (PH) ‡@	3836.97	...	+14.52	0.77
Glob Ins Fund F Acc ‡@	586.68	...	+0.12	...
Glob Ins Fund F Inc ‡@	586.68	...	+0.12	...
Glob Ins Fund I Acc ‡@	583.25	...	+0.12	...
Glob Ins Fund I Inc ‡@	583.25	...	+0.12	...
Glob Sust Fund F Acc (PH) ‡@	1230.73	...	-5.52	0.52
Glob Sust Fund F Inc ‡@	1305.30	...	+2.64	...
Glob Sust Fund I Acc ‡@	1327.14	...	+2.67	...
Glob Sust Fund I Acc (PH) ‡@	1227.91	...	-5.50	0.38
Glob Sustain Fund F Acc ‡@	1335.27	...	+2.70	...
Stg Corp Bond F F Acc ‡@	118.58	...	+0.44	3.72
Stg Corp Bond F F Inc ‡@	91.47	...	+0.35	3.80
Stg Corp Bond F I Acc ‡@	2519.63	...	+9.39	3.46
Stg Corp Bond F I Inc ‡@	1290.09	...	+4.81	3.55
Sust Fixed Inc Opps F F Acc ‡@	934.81	...	-0.79	3.25
Sust Fixed Inc Opps F F Inc ‡@	880.28	...	-0.75	3.34
Sust Fixed Inc Opps F I Acc ‡@	929.72	...	-0.79	3.06
Sust Fixed Inc Opps F I Inc ‡@	879.89	...	-0.75	3.12
US Adv F F Acc ‡@	1560.33	...	-2.73	...
US Adv F F Acc (PH) ‡@	887.51	...	-8.27	...
US Adv F I Acc ‡@	1657.38	...	-2.91	...
US Adv F I Acc (PH) ‡@	927.14	...	-8.67	...

SANTANDER UNIT TST MGRS
08457 413002

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Bal Pfolio Inc ‡@	110.50	...	+0.40	...
Bal Port Gwth Acc ‡@	229.00	...	-0.90	1.78
Equity Inc Inc ‡@	191.20	...	-1.60	5.25
N&P UK Gwth Inc ‡@	182.80	...	+0.10	...
Stkmkt 100 Tkr @	261.00	261.00	+1.90	...
UK Growth Acc ‡@	458.70	...	-3.60	...
UK Growth Inc ‡@	241.60	...	-1.90	...

SCOTTISH MUTUAL INV MNGRS LTD
0141 248 6100

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
European Inc	1777.00	1873.48	+4.40	...
Far Eastern Inc	584.69	617.09	-0.73	1.42
Intl Growth Inc	380.56	400.59	+0.02	0.75
Japanese Inc	41.85	41.85	+0.43	0.56
Mutual European	2762.93	2908.99	-21.63	...
Mutual Far Eastern	887.11	936.26	-1.39	1.17
Mutual North Am	1983.00	2092.88	+6.23	0.24
Mutual UK Eq	1419.40	1428.80	-10.35	...
Nth American Inc	1227.65	1295.67	-7.28	...
UK Equity Inc	562.23	593.38	+1.31	...

SCOTTISH WIDOWS UNIT TRUST MGRS
0845 300 2244
Authorised Inv Funds (OEICs)
OEIC A Class
Managed Investment Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Bal Port A Acc ‡@	237.60	...	+0.80	0.01
Caut Port A Acc ‡@	207.10	...	+0.30	...
Caut Port A Inc ‡@	152.00	...	+0.30	...
Opps Port A Acc ‡@	280.20	...	+1.30	...
Prog Port A Acc ‡@	266.60	...	+1.10	...

Overseas Growth Investment Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Eur Sel Gth A Acc ‡@	3339.00	...	-12.00	2.14

Tracker and Specialist Investment Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
UK Trkr A Acc ‡@	385.30	...	+1.60	...
UK Trkr A Inc ‡@	190.80	...	+0.70	...

UK and Income Investment Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Corp Bond A Acc ‡@	274.80	...	-0.10	2.82
Corp Bond A Inc ‡@	100.10	...	...	2.86
Envir Invtr A Acc ‡@	366.40	...	-0.90	1.85
Hi Inc Bond A Ac ‡@	237.00	...	-0.50	...
Hi Inc Bond A Inc ‡@	68.05	...	-0.14	...
Hi Res A Acc ‡@	374.60	...	-0.50	3.98
Hi Res A Inc ‡@	113.20	...	-0.20	4.09
Safety Plus A Acc ‡@	40.49	...	...	...
Strat Inc A Acc ‡@	185.50	...	-0.10	3.80
Strat Inc A Inc ‡@	79.55	...	-0.02	3.88
UK Gwth A Acc ‡@	195.10	...	-0.40	...
UK Sel Gwth A Acc ‡@	2260.00	...	-11.00	...

OEIC B Class
Tracker and Specialist Investment Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
UK Trkr B Acc ‡@	425.60	...	+1.80	...
UK Trkr B Inc ‡@	189.80	...	+0.80	...

UK and Income Investment Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Corp Bond B Acc ‡@	370.70	...	+0.90	...
Corp Bond B Inc ‡@	136.30	...	+0.30	...
UK Gwth B Acc ‡@	205.60	...	-0.30	...
UK Sel Gwth B Acc ‡@	2481.00	...	...	...

OEIC C Class
UK and Income Investment Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
UK Gth C Inc ‡@	126.00	...	-0.30	...
UK Sel Gwth C Acc ‡@	2598.00	...	...	...

STANDARD LIFE INVESTMENTS
0845 279 3003
Investment Funds (OEIC) - Retail Shares

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
AAA Inc CAT Acc ‡@	87.39	...	+0.21	1.43
AAA Inc CAT Inc ‡@	48.58	...	+0.12	1.44
AAA Income Acc ‡@	95.37	...	+0.23	1.84
Amer Eq Gth Acc ‡@	208.40	...	+0.80	...
Corp Bond Acc ‡@	152.30	...	+0.60	3.47
Corp Bond Inc ‡@	49.58	...	+0.17	3.55
Euro Eq Gth Acc ‡@	262.10	...	+3.90	...
Glb Advtg CAT Acc ‡@	148.40	...	+0.30	1.39
Glob Advtg Acc ‡@	196.00	...	+0.50	1.36
Glob Eq Uncstrd Acc ‡@	170.00	...	+0.70	...
Higher Inc Acc ‡@	147.60	...	+0.30	4.55
Higher Inc Inc ‡@	44.32	...	+0.08	4.69
Japan Eq Gth Acc ‡@	127.40	...	...	...
Managed Acc ‡@	357.70	...	+0.90	...
Select Inc Acc ‡@	91.51	...	...	...
Select Inc Inc ‡@	51.26	...	-0.26	...
UK Eq Gth Acc ‡@	372.70	...	+1.70	...
UK Eq Hi Alpha ‡@	230.00	...	+1.00	...
UK Eq Hi Inc Acc ‡@	261.30	...	+1.30	4.66
UK Eq Hi Inc Inc ‡@	68.61	...	+0.34	4.82
UK Ethical Acc ‡@	193.80	...	-0.50	...
UK Opps Acc ‡@	234.40	...	...	...
UK Opps Inc ‡@	211.70	...	...	...
UK Smlr Cos Acc ‡@	707.60	...	-8.40	0.69

SVS BROWN SHIPLEY FUNDS
Enquiries:0141 222 1151

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Balanced A Acc ‡@	136.08	...	+0.08	...
Balanced A Inc ‡@	120.33	...	+0.07	...
Cautious A Acc ‡@	110.89	...	+0.07	1.93
Cautious A Inc ‡@	94.61	...	+0.06	1.95
Dynamic A Acc ‡@	336.74	...	-0.05	...
Dynamic A Inc ‡@	300.91	...	-0.04	...
Growth A Acc ‡@	344.52	...	+0.04	...
Income A Acc ‡@	246.85	...	+0.16	1.86
Sterling Bond Acc ‡@	242.37	...	-0.28	...
Sterling Bond Inc ‡@	97.00	...	-0.11	...

THREADNEEDLE INVESTMENTS
Client Serv: 0800 0683000
Intermediary Serv: 0800 0684000
Institutional Shares (Class 2) (500000 GBP)

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Threadneedle UK Eq Opps Ins Inc ‡@	129.30	...	+1.45	1.51

Retail Shares (Class 1)

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Threadneedle HY Bd Rtl Inc ‡@	36.65	...	+0.03	4.51
Threadneedle Mthly Etr Inc Rtl Inc ‡@	77.57	...	+0.83	3.68
Threadneedle SterlingCorpBd Ins Inc ‡@	52.03	...	+0.17	2.89
Threadneedle SterlingCorpBd Rtl Inc ‡@	51.93	...	+0.18	2.56
Threadneedle Stg Bd Ret Inc ‡@	41.70	...	+0.26	2.57
Threadneedle Strat Bd Ret ‡@	40.10	...	+0.05	4.01
Threadneedle UK Eq Inc Rtl Inc ‡@	97.42	...	+1.18	3.56
Threadneedle UK Growth & Inc Rtl Inc ‡@	92.07	...	+0.84	...
Threadneedle UK Insti Rtl ‡@	179.89	...	+1.70	1.90
Threadneedle UK Mthly Inc Rtl Inc ‡@	66.63	...	+0.66	4.36
Threadneedle UK Rtl Inc ‡@	134.34	...	+0.96	...
Threadneedle UK Smaller Coms Rtl Inc ‡@	337.61	...	-0.66	...

For Resolution see Ignis

TU FUND MANAGERS LIMITED

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
British	891.10	891.10	+1.40	0.96
European	210.70	219.40	+1.00	...

* Yield expressed as CAR (Compound Annual Return); † Ex dividend; ‡Middle price; . . . No significant data. # Periodic charge deducted from capital; @ Exit charge

British funds

Index-linked

12 month High	Low	Stock	Price (£)	+/–	Int Yld %	Grs rd yld
113.29	90.61	Tr IL 0⅛% 31	96.46	+ .52	...	0.58
114.00	82.01	Tr IL 0⅛% 36	90.23	+ .84	...	0.91
130.45	94.08	Tr IL 1⅛% 37	101.93	+ .93	1.16	0.98
113.74	78.25	Tr IL 0⅛% 39	86.20	+ .93	...	1.09
122.97	84.60	Tr IL 0⅝% 40	92.72	+1.01	...	1.11
114.37	75.20	Tr IL 0⅛% 41	83.79	+1.04	...	1.13
125.16	82.66	Tr IL 0⅝% 42	90.68	+1.10	0.69	1.17
113.13	72.26	Tr IL 0⅛% 44	79.62	+1.03	...	1.25
113.08	70.25	Tr IL 0⅛% 46	77.20	+1.10	...	1.29
129.81	80.78	Tr IL 0¾% 47	88.60	+1.18	0.86	1.30
113.04	66.79	Tr IL 0⅛% 48	75.00	+1.10	...	1.30
125.41	99.08	Tr IL 1¼% 32	105.27	+ .60	1.19	0.66
120.28	92.56	Tr IL 0¾% 34	99.50	+ .68	...	0.80
265.63	206.76	Tr IL 2% 35 *	239.55	+1.71	1.02	0.81
123.95	72.64	Tr IL 0½% 50	82.02	+1.18	...	1.30
117.10	60.14	Tr IL 0⅛% 58	69.71	+1.31	...	1.20
132.13	64.93	Tr IL 0⅜% 62	76.41	+1.52	...	1.13
126.92	55.87	Tr IL 0⅛% 65	68.52	+1.57	...	1.05
129.79	54.65	Tr IL 0⅛% 68	68.15	+1.67	...	1.02
148.46	55.40	Tr IL 0⅛% 73	71.81	+1.93	...	0.82
106.60	95.63	Tr IL 0⅛% 26	97.09	+ .25	...	1.29
115.59	99.63	Tr IL 1¼% 27	101.56	+ .36	1.35	0.87
110.12	93.33	Tr IL 0⅛% 28	96.75	+ .35	...	0.80
110.31	92.36	Tr IL 0⅛% 29	96.29	+ .37	...	0.81
359.71	301.39	Tr IL 4⅛% 30 *	335.53	+1.05	1.92	0.68
105.03	97.72	Tr IL 0⅛% 24	98.31	+ .05	...	3.32
380.26	359.04	Tr IL 2½% 24 *	377.10	+ .23	1.44	2.55
117.67	65.69	Tr IL 0¼% 52	75.46	+1.19	...	1.28
155.10	88.77	Tr IL 1¼% 55	100.27	+1.56	1.37	1.24
116.09	60.50	Tr IL 0⅛% 56	70.49	+1.27	...	1.21

Longs (Over 15 years)

12 month High	Low	Stock	Price (£)	+/–	Int Yld %	Grs rd yld
71.44	54.72	Tr 1¼% 41	58.20	+ .53	...	4.70
115.49	89.35	Tr 4¼% 46	92.63	+ .74	4.59	4.78
61.15	43.93	Tr 0⅞% 46	47.09	+ .50	...	4.73
70.13	51.06	Tr 1½% 47	53.95	+ .55	...	4.74
74.08	53.78	Tr 1¾% 49	56.32	+ .57	...	4.72
117.52	89.75	Tr 4¼% 49	92.48	+ .80	4.60	4.75
53.35	35.82	Tr 0⅝% 50	38.15	+ .49	...	4.67
117.50	98.29	Tr 4¾% 38	100.78	+ .61	4.71	4.68
72.59	58.05	Tr 1⅛% 39	61.17	+ .47	...	4.70
111.29	92.08	Tr 4¼% 39	94.85	+ .62	4.48	4.71
112.08	91.30	Tr 4¼% 40	94.40	+ .67	...	4.73
112.80	63.35	Tr 0⅛% 51	72.90	+1.11	...	1.30
63.87	44.40	Tr 1¼% 51	46.79	+ .54	...	4.69
98.61	76.78	Tr 3¼% 44	80.36	+ .64	...	4.77
117.12	93.79	Tr 4½% 42	96.95	+ .70	4.64	4.74
102.68	79.61	Tr 3½% 45	82.99	+ .68	...	4.78
110.80	82.24	Tr 3¾% 52	84.77	+ .80	...	4.72
73.50	49.39	Tr 1¾% 57	51.62	+ .63	...	4.57
122.75	86.40	Tr 4% 60	89.38	+ .90	...	4.60
46.24	26.21	Tr 0½% 61	28.62	+ .49	...	4.35
91.47	59.83	Tr 2½% 65	62.33	+ .78	...	4.51
116.13	77.61	Tr 3½% 68	80.54	+ .95	...	4.52
70.95	42.99	Tr 1⅝% 71	45.25	+ .65	...	4.35
57.59	32.96	Tr 1⅛% 73	35.39	+ .59	...	4.25
103.74	81.74	Tr 3¾% 53	84.40	+ .81	...	4.73
67.79	46.78	Tr 1½% 53	49.13	+ .58	...	4.68
70.42	48.25	Tr 1⅝% 54	50.49	+ .60	...	4.65
123.23	90.07	Tr 4¼% 55	93.00	+ .93	4.57	4.67

Mediums (5-15 years)

12 month High	Low	Stock	Price (£)	+/–	Int Yld %	Grs rd yld
117.51	104.85	Tr 6% 28	106.86	+ .35	5.61	4.51
86.40	77.61	Tr 0½% 29	80.85	+ .32	...	4.54
87.71	78.21	Tr 0⅞% 29	81.29	+ .33	...	4.39
82.38	72.39	Tr 0⅜% 30	75.62	+ .33	...	4.40
113.46	100.56	Tr 4¾% 30	102.18	+ .39	4.65	4.39
79.47	69.25	Tr 0¼% 31	72.51	+ .34	...	4.41
93.30	85.65	Tr 1¼% 27	88.39	+ .27	...	4.56
106.29	96.63	Tr 4¼% 27	98.76	+ .32	4.30	4.57
87.24	79.15	Tr 0⅛% 28	82.63	+ .27	...	4.53
83.95	73.06	Tr 1% 32	76.10	+ .36	...	4.44
113.35	97.71	Tr 4½% 34	99.74	+ .47	4.51	4.53
73.11	61.24	Tr 0⅝% 35	64.22	+ .41	...	4.55
103.82	95.72	Tr 4 ⅛% 27	97.74	+ .26	...	4.86
91.05	84.28	Tr 0⅜% 26	87.61	+ .22	...	4.69
95.52	89.28	Tr 1½% 26	91.66	+ .21	...	4.64
110.66	94.67	Tr 4¼% 36	96.95	+ .52	4.38	4.57
81.78	67.54	Tr 1¾% 37	70.38	+ .46	...	4.65
104.43	...	Tr 3¾% 38	90.09	+ .54	...	4.71
110.35	97.27	Tr 4¼% 32	99.04	+ .42	4.29	4.38
101.14	88.88	Tr 4 ⅛% 27	90.69	+ .41	...	4.47
79.92	68.57	Tr 0⅞% 33	71.45	+ .40	...	4.48
93.52	84.72	Tr 1⅝% 28	87.19	+ .31	...	4.45

Shorts (under 5 years)

12 month High	Low	Stock	Price (£)	+/–	Int Yld %	Grs rd yld
99.58	96.82	Tr 2¾% 24	97.75	+ .08	...	5.10
97.82	92.80	Tr 2% 25	94.51	+ .18	...	4.92
100.88	95.02	Tr 3½% 25	96.72	+ .17	...	5.15
92.38	86.33	Tr 0⅛% 26	89.87	+ .19	...	4.65
94.97	90.15	Tr 0⅝% 25	92.99	+ .14	...	4.86
104.80	99.24	Tr 5% 25	100.06	+ .12	5.00	4.96
94.34	90.04	Tr 0¼% 25	93.73	+ .11	...	4.96
97.54	94.79	Tr 1% 24	97.54	+ .05	...	5.09
100.00	98.04	Tr 2¼% 23	100.00	+ ...	...	2.23
98.10	94.34	Tr 0⅛% 24	98.10	+ .02	...	5.00

* maturities having an eight-month indexation lag.

This is a paid for information service. For further details on a particular fund, readers should contact their fund manager.

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Business Equity prices

Dividend yields Please note that the information in the dividend yields column has been suspended due to technical problems at Morningstar, the provider.
12-month high and low High/low prices for UK equities are based on closing prices. Investment trust high and low prices are based on intra-day figures.

Automobiles & parts

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
395⅜	89½	Aston Martin Lag	325½	-9½	...	-1.9

Banking & finance

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
236⅝	133	**Abrdn**‡	156½	-1	...	3.4
9¾	6⅛	Acuity RM♦	7⅛	-¼	...	...
2467	1881½	**Admiral**‡	2363	-41	...	12.0
49¾	16	ADVFN♦	16	...	...	2.8
390	255⅛	AJ Bell	292	-1¾	...	27.3
27242⅛	21139½	Aon Corpn	26786⅝	+206¾	...	65.3
1075	645	Arbuthnot Bkg♦‡	950	-5	...	21.0
12½	7½	Argo Group♦	7½	...	...	3.4
286⅜	180⅞	Ashmore	192	-2⅝	...	6.5
1327¾	1138¾	Aus New Z	1271	-9⅝	...	9.9
462⅜	369½	**Aviva**‡	369½	-¼	...	48.6
341½	205	Banco Santander	289	-1	...	6.8
3635	1944	Bank of Georgia	3365	-55	...	10.4
189⅝	133⅞	**Barclays**‡	147⅞	-1⅛	...	3.5
¼	...	Blue Star Capital♦	...	...	...	2.3
418	283	BP Marsh&Ptnrs♦	357	...	...	9.8
15⅛	6¾	Braveheart Inv♦	12¼	...	...	0.3
515	512	Brewin Dolphin	515	+1	...	28.1
303⅜	166⅞	Bridgepoint‡	188½	-⅝	...	11.7
61½	24½	Cenkos Secs♦‡	29	...	...	5.9
325	262½	Chesnara	267½	-3	...	14.8
52¾	9	City of Lon Gp♦	10	+1	...	-0.6
470	343½	City Lon Inv Gp	384	-16	...	9.0
1131	796½	Close Bros	822	...	...	6.1
268	100¾	CMC Markets	100¾	-3	...	3.0
1023	561½	Commerzbk	783¼	-13⅞	...	40.1
1056⅞	650⅜	Deutsche Bk	822¼	+1	...	9.6
235¼	133⅞	Direct Line Ins	173¾	+23¾	...	7.2
77	44⅛	EFG-Hermes Hldg	48⅞	-3⅛	...	3.1
195	122½	EPE Special Opps♦	157½	+5	...	8.8
1214⅛	839⅜	FBD	1111	...	...	4.9
70	65	Fiske♦	65	...	...	11.5
75	53½	Frenkel Topping♦	56½	-2½	...	32.8
992	602	Georgia Capital	992	+12	...	2.7
1065	670	Gresham House♦	1062½	-2½	...	42.6
506	394	H&T Group♦‡	405	-7	...	12.9
55½	33	Hansard Global	41⅜	-1⅛	...	14.2
949½	736	**Hargreaves Lansdown**	736	-5⅛	...	13.1
175	117½	Helios Under♦	127½	...	...	...
654⅞	442⅛	**HSBC**‡	584⅝	-½	...	12.7
836½	632½	IG Group	651½	-11½	...	6.6
883	500	Impax♦	524	-7	...	17.2
1511½	953⅛	Intermed Capital	1333	-8½	...	7.6
128	64⅜	IPF‡	119	-½	...	6.6
168	121½	International Public P'ship	128½	-⅛	...	16.5
546⅜	351½	Investec	462⅛	-1	...	11.6
340	253	Investment Co	335	...	...	12.0
75⅜	52	IP Group	58⅛	...	...	2.1
195	94	Jarvis Securities♦‡	107½	+2½	...	7.7
151	83¾	Jupiter Fund Mgmt	96⅛	-¾	...	3.5
95¼	55⅞	Just Group‡	73¼	-⅝	...	...
664	461¾	Lancashire Holdings‡	572	-1	...	...
265¾	204	**Legal & Gen**‡	213½	-¼	...	6.5
...	...	Liberty Group	502⅝	-2⅝	...	...
1290	587½	Liontrust	614	-13	...	7.6
54	31	Livermore Invs♦	36½	...	...	2.3
53⅞	39	**Lloyds Banking Group**‡	41	-⅜	...	5.7
32½	19½	LMS Capital‡	19½	...	...	8.5
8774	7104	**Lond Stk Ex Gp**‡	8176	-88	...	83.6
219¼	159⅞	**M&G**	193¾	+2	...	60.5
286¾	202	Man‡	203½	-⅝	...	8.1
29	8¼	Manx Fin♦	22	...	...	11.1
2¾	1	Marechale Cap♦	1⅝	...	...	0.8
15651⅞	11772¾	Marsh McLn	15651⅞	+109	...	32.6
670	530	Mattioli Woods♦	605	...	...	...
19½	7½	Metal Tiger♦	9	+¾	...	3.5
153⅛	69	Metro Bank	99½	-1¼	...	-0.6
1673¼	1285⅞	Nat Aust Bk	1461	-3½	...	14.4
309⅞	212⅜	**NatWest**‡	224⅝	-3⅛	...	8.8
341	170⅜	Numis♦	334½	...	...	6.8
568½	321¾	Onesavings Bank‡	321¾	-6½	...	4.2
626	377½	PayPoint‡	558	+16	...	17.4
3⅛	¼	PCF Group♦	⅞	+¼	...	-0.4
647	504¾	**Phoenix**	507	-3½	...	-5.8
1371½	797½	**Prudential**‡	903⅜	-29¾	...	14.6
2¼	⅞	Quantum Blockchain♦	1¼	...	...	-7.2
109⅜	71¼	Quilter‡	87¾	+¼	...	62.7
100½	44	Randall & Quilter♦	52	-⅞	...	77.5
2220	1570	Rathbone Grp	1712	-6	...	13.2
¾	½	RiverFort Global Opps♦	⅝	...	...	1.8
2050	1395	Rockwood Strategic	1835	...	...	2.6
2570	1905	S & U	2150	-55	...	10.1
1¾	⅜	Sancus Lending Grp♦	⅝	...	...	-0.2
51⅞	40	Schroder REIT	41⅛	-¾	...	4.3
506¾	358¾	**Schroders**‡	403⅞	-3	...	1.8
1304½	847¾	**St James Place**‡	847¾	-6⅜	...	16.1
790¾	519½	**Stand Chart**‡	705⅛	+2¾	...	15.8
8½	6½	Starvest♦	6½	...	...	-1.0
60	24½	STM Group♦‡	60	+2½	...	23.1
4061⅜	3148	Sun Life Can	3900	-44½	...	9.9
9	5¾	Tavistock Inv♦	5¾	+⅛	...	0.9
2850	1634	TBC Bank Group‡	2700	-80	...	7.9
12¼	3½	Tern♦	4⅜	...	...	3.2
57	48	Thames Ventures VCT‡	48	...	...	6.4
29¼	15¼	Time Finance♦	26¼	...	...	16.0
243¾	103	Vanquis‡	109⅜	+1	...	2.0
1245	900	Volvere♦	1145	-10	...	...
34½	7	WH Ireland♦	7	...	...	3.9
30½	23	Walker Crips Grp	23	...	...	65.7
3827⅜	2859⅛	Wells Fargo	3243½	-44	...	8.8
1252⅛	1023¾	Westpac	1079¼	-3½	...	14.6
31	21½	Worsley Investors Ltd	27⅞	...	...	87.1
40912⅝	34801⅛	Zurich Fincl	37124¾	+8⅞	...	14.5

Investment companies

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	Dis(-) or Pm
2036	1044½	**3I Group**	1986	+29	...	7.3
346	276⅝	3i Infrastructure	303½	-1	...	-9.2
1428	1066	Aberforth Smlr	1206	-8	...	-13.5
99⅜	78	abrdnDivInc&Grwth	83⅛	+⅛	...	-27.0
1057½	884	Alliance	1048	-2	...	-6.1
457	338¼	Asia Dragon Tr	359	-3	...	-16.0
220	171½	Athelney Trust	195	...	...	-8.7
206½	171¾	AVI Global Trust	197½	-⅛	...	-10.9
330	206¼	Baillie Gifford Ch Gr	216	-3½	...	-12.5
102⅛	73½	BaillieGifford Eu Gr	86	-¾	...	-13.7
829	692	Baillie Gifford JpnTr	736	-3	...	-8.1
163¾	125⅜	Baillie Gifford SN	136	-⅛	...	-12.8
180¾	139⅜	Baillie Gifford UK Gr	157⅜	-½	...	-13.8
100⅛	64	Bal Comm Prop	70⅜	-½	...	-39.4
107	90⅞	Bankers Inv Trst	97½	...	...	-13.1
5232	334	BH Macro	350	+½	...	-12.1
1048	745⅜	Biotech Growth	785	+1	...	-7.9
149½	108	BlckRck Com Inc	114½	-1⅞	...	-11.0
148	123	BlckRck Fro Inv	141½	-½	...	-9.2
566	396	BlckRck Grt Euro	524	-3	...	-5.6
206	164	BlckRck Inc & Gwth	183	+2	...	-10.6
449	331½	BlckRck Latin Am	390	-2	...	-13.9
1450	1162	BlckRck Smlr	1262	-6	...	-13.4
215	178	BlckRck Sustain Amer	180½	-½	...	-8.6
670	477⅞	BlckRck Throgmorton	555	-3	...	-8.2
774	538	BlckRck Wld Min	578	-18	...	-2.0
1321⅜	1115	Brown Adv US sm	1170	-2½	...	-17.6
1115	888	Brunner	1062½	+2½	...	-13.2
4065	3015	Caledonia Inv	3510	+30	...	-31.3
432	366½	City of Lon IT	390½	-½	...	1.7
121	60	Crystal Amber Fd♦	62	-1	...	-35.1
534	384	CT Priv Eq Ord	511	...	...	-24.7
96	72	CT Property	73½	-1¼	...	-14.5
317	256	CT UK Cap&Inc	280	-2½	...	-4.0
93	77	CT UK HIT B	80	...	...	-5.1
89	71	CT UK HIT	80	-1	...	-3.9
356	294	CT UK HIT UNIT	315	...	...	-6.5
590	476	Dunedin Entp	557½	-2½	...	-9.7
690	537	Edinburgh IT	650	+2	...	-9.6
195⅜	135⅛	Edin Wwide	151	-¾	...	-16.9
336	271	EP Global Opp	291	...	...	-19.2
97¾	74½	European Assets	86½	-⅞	...	-8.3
817	608	European Opp Trust	796	+1	...	-10.9
992	825⅝	**F&C Invest Tr**	866	...	...	-11.6
536	413½	Fidlty Asian Val	520	-2	...	-5.2
299⅜	181⅞	Fidelity China Sp	210½	-5	...	-10.4
649⅞	552⅝	FdltyEmrgMkt	592½	-3½	...	-13.3
362	258½	Fidelity European Trust	347	-1½	...	-4.4
187	154	Fidlty Jap Tru	170	-¼	...	-11.8
293½	232	Fidlty Spec Val	267	-1	...	-8.2
923	760⅛	Fins Gwth & Inc	863	...	...	-4.2
107⅞	68⅛	GCP Infrastructure	73	-½	...	-32.9
39	24	Gldn Prosp Prc Mtl	27⅛	...	...	-16.9
168½	130⅜	Greencoat UK Wind	138⅝	-⅞	...	-15.5
201¼	161	Hansa Investment	185	+4	...	-43.2
193⅞	160	Hansa Inv Co 'A'	182	...	...	-42.9
2450	1900	Hbrvest Glbl Pt Eq	2305	...	...	-40.3
166¾	120½	Hend Euro Foc	160½	-½	...	-10.5
181	137¼	Hend High Inc	160½	...	...	-1.6
907	674¼	Hend Smlr	710	+1	...	-13.5
1966	1540	Herald	1752	-22	...	-14.4
419⅝	316	HgCapital Trust	386½	+5	...	-18.6
179	119⅝	HICL Infra	127¾	-½	...	-21.8
500	216	Highbridge Tactical	425	...	...	61.1
1223¾	928	ICG Ent Tr	1126	-4	...	-39.5
462½	373⅛	Impax Env Mkts	392½	-1	...	-5.5
374	280	Invesco Asia Tr	323	-5	...	-9.7
173	141	Invesco Bond Inc	161½	-½	...	1.0
155⅜	111	IPST Bal	117	-2	...	-22.3
258½	200	IPST Gbl Eq	244	...	...	-12.1
101	88	IPST Managed	93½	...	...	-14.9
177	141	IPST UK Eq	155	...	...	-13.2
478	373½	IP UKSmallerCos	415	+1	...	-8.9
814	657½	JPM American	802	-1	...	-1.7
402¼	294½	JPM Asia Gro & Inc	347	-2½	...	-8.9
419	237½	JPM China	248	-8	...	-10.3
722	624	JPM Claverhs	652	...	...	-4.8
804	514	JPMorgan Emerg E & ME & Africa	648	-1¾	...	178.8
120⅜	91	JPM Em Mkts	106½	-¾	...	-6.8
449	339	JPM Euro disc	381½	+½	...	-13.9
142½	108	JPM GEMI	126	...	...	-11.5
481	394	JPM GG&I	471½	...	...	1.5
898	764	JPM Indian	852	+8	...	-18.9
347	297	JPM Jap Sml Co	319	...	...	-12.4
521	416	JPM Japan	485½	-1	...	-8.7
974¾	735	JPM Mid Cap	874	-3	...	-13.6
98	85¼	JPM Multi-asset G&I	91½	-¼	...	-3.9
303	230	JPM Smllr Co	263	+½	...	-13.4
228½	180½	Keystone Positive Change Inv plc	211	-1	...	-15.3
871	649	Law Debenture	803	+3	...	1.7
135	99	Lowland	111½	+¾	...	-13.7
223	156¾	Majedie	182½	-1¼	...	-24.7
358	272½	M Currie Port	325	-4	...	-1.8
104½	85	Marwyn Val In	91½	...	...	-45.6
222	158¼	Mercantile IT	196¾	-¾	...	-13.3
606	480	Merchants	532	...	...	0.8
733¾	639¾	Mid Wynd	710	-1	...	-1.9
1073	906	Monks Inv Tst	962	-10	...	-13.3
151⅛	104⅛	Montanaro Eur Sml	127¾	-½	...	-12.1
886	715	Murray Income Trust	818	+2	...	-8.7
275¾	225½	Murray Int	241	-1½	...	-6.2
80⅛	70⅛	Nb Global Floating	73⅛	...	...	-8.1
384	326	Pacific Assets	366	+2	...	-7.7
285	229⅛	Pantheon Int	282½	-1	...	-37.3
3115	2565	**Pershing Sq**	3038	-6	...	-35.2
492	458⅞	Personal Assets	465½	+2	...	-1.2
2340	1697½	Polar Cap Tech	2260	-25	...	-13.6
196	115	Prem Glb & Inf	121	...	...	-8.8
148⅛	103½	Renewables Inf	107½	-¾	...	-17.7
2400	1784	RIT Cap Ptnr	1910	-10	...	-20.0
736	510	Riverstone	600	+12	...	-54.4
457	366½	Schroder TotRt	403	...	...	-6.5
549¾	446	Schrd Asia Pac	491	-2	...	-11.5
324	254½	Schrod Inc Gwth	266	...	...	-9.2
240	190	Schrod Jap Gwth	238	+4	...	-11.1
626	454	Schrod UKMid	534	...	...	-13.6
19⅛	11½	Schroder UK PP Tr	12⅞	...	...	-51.1
543	434	Scot American	500	-3	...	1.5
856¾	604¾	**Scot Mtge**	684	-5	...	-19.5
239¼	205	Secs Tst Scot	218	+½	...	-1.4
94¾	71	Sequoia Eco	82¾	...	...	-11.0
249½	195⅛	Temple Bar	229	...	...	-6.2
166	130	Tplton Emg Mkt	147½	-1	...	-13.7
162¾	122	The Glbl Smaller	143⅜	-⅛	...	-13.3
¼	...	Tiger Royal and Inv♦	⅛	...	...	66.6
362½	254	TR Property	280½	-4	...	-8.4
74	64⅜	Troy Inc&Gth	69	-⅛	...	-1.8
200	122	Utilico Ord	131	-2	...	-36.3
234	197½	Utilico Emerging Mkt	219	...	...	-14.8
712	500	Vietnam Ent Inv	621	+1	...	-18.9
237	199¾	Witan	223½	...	...	-10.3
349½	296	Ww Health	310	+3	...	-10.0



Construction & property

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
183½	135	Alumasc♦	160½	+2	...	8.1
11	8⅝	Aseana Props	10	+¾	...	-5.0
64¾	43⅛	Assura‡	44¾	-⅝	...	8.9
2¾	1¾	Aukett Swanke♦	1¾	...	...	-2.6
393⅜	294½	Balfour Beatty	322½	...	...	15.2
506⅜	323⅜	**Barratt Devs**	437	-3	...	6.8
2500	1586½	Bellway	2118	...	...	6.3
4504	3165	**Berkeley**‡	3972	-12	...	10.3
1290	987	Big Yellow Group	1035	-31	...	6.8
455	181½	Billington Hldgs♦	350	...	...	28.4
281	200	Boot (Henry)	202	-6	...	10.8
471⅜	297¼	Br Land	311⅝	-1⅞	...	42.7
167½	120	Caledonian Tst♦	160	...	...	31.9
61⅜	43¼	Cap & Regnl‡	56	-1⅜	...	-0.4
2550	2350	Cardiff Prop	2450	...	...	26.6
25	1¾	Carecapital♦#	1⅞	...	...	-0.2
155	106	Clarke T‡	137	+3	...	9.8
261	191⅝	Countryside Partner	229¾	+14	...	16.7
27½	5⅞	Craven House♦	13⅛	-⅜	...	-0.2
4674	2858½	**CRH**	4363	-14	...	18.1
2726	1812	Derwent London‡	1846	-28	...	8.2
4½	3⅛	Dolphin Capital♦	4½	...	...	-3.1
29	19¼	First Prop♦	19¼	...	...	...
45½	34½	Fletcher King♦	36½	...	...	...
42	27¼	Foxtons Group‡	37⅜	...	...	...
210	145	Galliford Try	195½	+⅛	...	43.4
357½	252½	Genuit Group‡	321	+2	...	19.4
490	335	Gleeson (MJ)	373	+5	...	5.8
988⅝	630½	Grafton	887⅜	+3¾	...	10.2
275⅛	205⅜	Grainger	233⅜	...	...	14.5
603½	382¾	Great Portland	417½	-½	...	-5.2
30½	17⅛	Hammerson‡	24¾	+¼	...	-2.6
138½	101	Harworth Gp	103	-2	...	3.5
630	400	Heath (Samuel)♦‡	400	...	...	8.2
389	219	Helical PLC	219	-6	...	5.2
1025	750	Highcroft Invs	845	+10	...	3.6
201⅛	135¾	Ibstock‡	145	-1	...	18.8
224	176	James Halstead♦	200	-1	...	21.3
856	591	Keller‡	777	-5	...	9.0
6511¾	3844	Kingspan Group	6214⅛	-221⅞	...	24.4
743⅛	485¼	**Land Sec**‡	577	-8⅛	...	...
93⅞	58	Life Science Reit	65	+½	...	...
22	10½	Lon & Assoc	10¾	...	...	-1.4
212½	161¾	Londonmetric Property‡	173	-2⅝	...	3.6
62	45¼	Macau Prop Op	50	-¾	...	-6.4
366½	225⅜	Marshalls	266⅜	+5⅛	...	9.7
101	74	Michelmersh♦	89½	...	...	14.2
1960	1392	Morgan Sindall	1960	-8	...	9.5
12750	10550	Mountview	10550	-100	...	13.1
94½	68¼	NewRiver REIT	81¼	+¾	...	-2.8
270	195	Palace Capital	252½	+2½	...	12.0
335	260	Panther Securities♦	285	...	...	2.5
1531	968½	**Persimmon**	1016	-14½	...	4.1
3⅝	1⅜	Pires Investments♦	1½	...	...	-3.3
65	30	Plaza Cent	30	...	...	...
138⅛	88¾	Primary Health Properties	92¾	-½	...	9.4
35¼	28¼	Real Estate Invs♦	29½	...	...	3.8
545	372½	Redrow	468⅛	+7	...	5.8
1074	794	Safestore	804	-57½	...	4.5
1055	763½	Savills‡	915	+5	...	9.1
6¼	5⅜	Secure Property♦	6	+⅝	...	15.8
946½	694	**Segro**‡	726½	-⅜	...	2.1
44⅜	27¾	SIG	34⅛	-¼	...	...
63	37⅜	SigmaRoc♦	58	+4	...	...
91¾	66½	Sirius Real Estate	89⅛	+1	...	6.9
173½	160½	Smart (J)	166	...	...	4.5
50	27	Steppe Cement♦	27	-½	...	6.2
128¼	85	**Taylor Wimpey**	112¾	...	...	7.4
170½	121½	Town Centre	123½	...	...	4.8
1082½	738	Travis Perkins	810½	-13⅛	...	7.9
170	123½	Tritax Big Box Reit	139	-¼	...	2.5
82¾	50¾	Tritax Eurobox‡	52½	-⅛	...	...
318	184½	Tyman‡	301½	+3	...	11.9
1072	791½	**Unite**	911½	-4	...	10.6
851	519½	Vistry Group	796	+24	...	6.9
157	77½	Warehouse REIT‡	80¾	-3¼	...	1.9
537	343⅜	Workspace Grp	485¾	-3¾	...	-7.2
700	622½	Wynnstay Props♦	690	...	...	5.0

Consumer goods

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
5⅛	1	Agriterra♦	1¼	...	...	-0.1
39½	25½	Airea♦	31½	...	...	11.6
910	652	Anglo-Eastern‡	728	-16	...	6.6
297½	147½	Animalcare♦	175	...	...	...
2114	1237	**AB Foods**	1967½	+10	...	32.5
121	82⅜	Bakkavor Group	101	...	...	10.5
561	432	Barr (AG)	496	+12	...	17.6
3⅞	¾	Bidstack Group♦	¾	...	...	-0.6
43½	24½	Brand Architekts♦	28	...	...	-1.2
3509	2484½	**Brit Amer Tob**	2581½	-2	...	8.7
936	707½	Britvic	873	+4	...	19.8
2641	1636	**Burberry**	2095	+10	...	18.0
183¾	123⅜	C&C Grp	136	-¾	...	-8.1
5½	1	Capital Metals♦	1	...	...	-0.2
149¾	92	Carr's Grp‡	129	...	...	15.9
525	255	Character Grp♦	267	-1	...	4.7
1640	1070	Churchill China♦	1330	+10	...	...
2565	1840	**Coca Cola HBC**	2224	-1	...	17.7
840	610	Colefax♦	730	-20	...	12.9
3406	2586	Cranswick	3406	+14	...	17.9
329	164	Devro	329	...	...	17.8
3857½	3175	**Diageo**‡	3175	-½	...	24.4
1¼	⅜	Distil♦	½	...	...	12.5
908	670	Evans (M.P.)♦	750	+10	...	6.4
103½	71	Finsbury Food♦	91	...	...	10.8
11700	5690	Games Workshop‡	10400	-100	...	28.6
1324⅛	899¼	Glanbia‡	1274⅞	-24	...	31.4
92¼	60¾	Greencore	78⅞	+⅜	...	15.7
348	214	Headlam	226	+4	...	9.7
973	500	Hilton Food	687	+7	...	14.3
29	17	Hornby♦	17	+¼	...	80.9
2185	1695	**Imperial Brands**‡	1744½	...	...	5.8
1½	1	J Lewis Hford♦	1¼	+¼	...	7.9
8675¾	6972⅛	Kerry Gp	7307¾	-160¾	...	20.2
44⅜	19	McBride	38⅞	...	...	-6.9
295	200	Mulberry Group♦	200	...	...	8.2
1155	958	Nichols♦‡	1050	+10	...	...
232	143	Norcros	154	+5	...	4.8
372½	269¾	Origin Ents♦	291⅝	...	...	9.2
11⅝	...	Pittards♦#	5⅜	+1	...	2.5
512½	282	Portmeirion♦	293	+6	...	12.4
⅞	½	Provexis♦	⅝	...	...	0.3
221	153¾	PZ Cussons	156	-1⅜	...	17.9
125	51	REA	52¼	+1¼	...	-4.1
2	⅞	Real Gd Fd♦	1⅛	...	...	0.1
320	200	Tandem♦	210	...	...	3.0
724	507	Treatt	510	-10	...	20.4
3¼	1¾	Ukrproduct Gp♦	2½	...	...	-1.6
5051	4451	Unilever (NV)	4686½	+41	...	24.0
4443½	3838	**Unilever**	4019½	+38	...	20.6
722	362	Victoria♦	523	-28	...	...

Engineering

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
...	...	Ass Br Eng#	15	...	...	-3.5
1200	624	Avon Rubber‡	624	-7	...	...
395	268½	Babcock	395	+7	...	-2.4
1032	714	**BAE**	1029	+15	...	18.8
2150	1200	Braime A N/V♦	1475	...	...	16.6
1850	1650	Braime Group♦	1850	+50	...	20.8
580	470	Caffyns	515	...	...	7.4
4½	1⅛	Cap XX Ld♦	1⅜	...	...	-2.9
419	279	Castings	344	+6	...	16.6
5	2⅞	Chamberlin♦	2⅞	...	...	-0.2
34	14	Checkit♦	26	...	...	-3.1
540	391	Cohort♦‡	505	...	...	44.8
400	244	Crestchic Plc♦	399	...	...	...
1335	815	Dewhurst♦	855	...	...	9.8
325	192¼	Dialight	228	+10	...	...
1251¾	812⅜	Electrolux 'B'	812⅜	-27¼	...	6.1
182½	85½	Feedback♦	90	...	...	...
664	426	Gooch Hsego♦	522	+1	...	38.6
4800	2550	Goodwin	4720	-70	...	26.0
2498	1974	**Halma**	2160	-2	...	31.2
1810	893	Hill & Smith	1746	-8	...	41.0
89	61	Holders Tech♦‡	61	...	...	3.7
2¼	¾	Image Scan♦	1¾	...	...	10.2
1680	1071	**IMI**‡	1479	-11	...	20.2
...	...	Inspirit Energy♦	...	...	...	...
10200	6740	Judges Scientific♦	9200	-50	...	46.4
101½	72½	LPA♦	87½	...	...	...
798¾	798	Meggitt	798¾	+⅛	...	...
543⅛	200⅜	**Melrose**	537⅛	+28⅛	...	...
323½	217	Morgan Advanced	249	-9½	...	10.5
325	187½	Mpac♦	187½	-22½	...	4.9
745	317	MS Intl♦	680	-10	...	97.1
2855	1720	Oxford Inst‡	2200	-10	...	30.0
1784⅛	1039¼	Philips El nv	1711¾	-9¼	...	30.4
15½	11¼	PipeHawk♦	11⅝	...	...	24.8
72	23⅛	Pressure Tech♦	32½	+2	...	-2.7
4232	3342	Renishaw	3540	-22	...	20.1
31	20½	Renold♦	30⅜	...	...	10.8
223¾	66⅛	**Rolls-Royce**	223¾	+9	...	...
1⅝	⅝	Ross Gp	⅝	...	...	-1.6
342⅛	229½	Rotork‡	303⅛	-1⅜	...	32.9
200	100	SDI Group♦	100	-2	...	16.5
181⅛	111	Senior	177⅜	+2	...	30.9
75	48	Severfield‡	61½	-1	...	11.0
14¼	2⅝	Six Hundred♦	2⅝	...	...	15.5
1556⅝	1048¼	SKF B	1293⅜	-26½	...	9.5
300	225	Slingsby (HC)♦	265	-25	...	4.3
1797½	1442½	**Smiths**	1655	+5	...	26.3
1435	986	Solid State♦‡	1325	+25	...	31.9
450	257	Somero Enter♦	295	+5	...	6.5
3841	2690	Spectris	3300	-24	...	10.8
12350	9702	**Spirax-Sarco**	9882	-28	...	31.1
57	26½	Surface Trsfms♦	32¼	+¼	...	...
3⅝	2	Tanfield♦	3⅝	...	...	...
440	345½	Thorpe FW♦	395	+10	...	27.4
2⅛	⅝	TP Group♦	2⅛	...	...	-3.3
102½	48½	Transense Tech♦	97½	...	...	71.6
...	...	Ultra Electrncs	3500	+6	...	37.4
454⅛	302⅛	Vesuvius‡	445	+2⅛	...	11.8
1470	509	Videndum	515	-26	...	9.4
335	202	Volex♦	319½	-2	...	17.4
2021	1394½	**Weir**	1897½	-13	...	32.0
2680	1464	XP Power‡	2185	+40	...	11.6
150	77½	Zytronic♦	77½	+1	...	25.8

Health

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
1454	1103	Abcam♦	1226	+123	...	...
290½	185¾	AdvancedMedical♦	185¾	+8½	...	29.2
19¾	⅞	Allergy Therap♦	3	+⅛	...	-3.5
74½	11	Angle♦	14½	+3	...	-1.9
575	178½	Anpario♦	230	+15	...	12.1
12294	9656	**AstraZeneca**‡	10824	+218	...	...
248½	196⅝	**Convatec**‡	230¾	-⅜	...	53.9
43	25⅜	Creighton	31½	...	...	6.0
3812	2520	Dechra Pharma	3812	...	...	56.9
1½	⅛	Deltex Medical♦	⅛	...	...	-1.0
23	10½	e-Therapeutics♦	15⅜	-½	...	...
130	82½	Eco Animal Hlth♦	109	...	...	13.2
51	24⅝	EKF Diagnostics♦	25¾	-½	...	7.3
65	35¾	Futura Medical♦	49½	-1½	...	...
3272	2062	Genus	2062	-172	...	36.6
1523	1296	**GSK**‡	1388⅛	+11½	...	16.0
½	¼	Gunsynd♦	¼	...	...	3.4
353½	246⅛	**Haleon**‡	315¼	+2⅜	...	...
2205	1190½	Hikma Pharms‡	2089	-6	...	15.6
335	134½	Hutchmed China♦	223¾	-5¼	...	...
6⅞	1½	ImmuPharma♦	2	...	...	-0.6
7025	1365	Indivior	1812	+14	...	...
88½	42	Inspiration Health♦	44	...	...	6.8
41½	17½	IXICO♦	20	...	...	6.4
501	491½	Mediclinic	501	+½	...	31.3
3½	1⅜	N4 Pharma♦	1½	...	...	-1.7
71½	34	NIOX Group♦‡	68⅜	+⅜	...	68.4
73.32	93.95	Novartis	CHF88.63	+1.42	...	10.1

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
4	2⅛	Omega Diags♦	2⅛	...	...	-0.8
14	2⅛	Ovoca Bio♦	2⅛	...	...	-0.6
562	297	Oxford Biomedica	309	+ 6	...	13.8
5	⅞	Physiomics♦	2	- ¼	...	-7.6
8½	3¼	Proteome Scies♦	6¼	...	...	...
6628	5556	**Reckitt Benckiser**‡	5744	+ 66	...	...
63½	15⅛	RUA Life Sciences♦	16¼	...	...	-1.5
217½	70	Sareum Hldgs♦	82½	...	...	...
1314½	984½	**Smith & Neph**	1061½	+ 18	...	24.0
250	203	Spire Hcare	212	...	...	...
24	6¾	Synairgen♦	8⅝	...	...	-0.3
70	48	Tissue Regenix♦	54	...	...	...
40½	8¼	Totally♦‡	8¼	+ ¼	...	13.2
435	295	Tristel♦	357½	+ 7½	...	73.7
20	6	ValiRx♦	6½	...	...	...

Industrials

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
107	54⅜	Accsys Tech♦	72½	+ 1	...	...
4628⅝	3327½	BASF	3870¾	- 59⅛	...	7.6
5352⅜	4061⅛	Bayer DM50	4310⅜	+ 10¼	...	50.3
180	46½	Biome Tech♦	157½	+ 2½	...	-5.2
2¾	1½	Byotrol♦	1⅝	...	...	...
...	...	Camb Gbl Timber♦	6¾	...	...	-9.0
79	50⅞	Coats Grp	76	+ ¾	...	16.9
7218	5176	**Croda**‡	5176	- 42	...	22.5
1080	575	Cropper (James)♦‡	720	- 15	...	21.9
129	87⅝	Elementis	116½	+ ¾	...	...
19	11	Hardide♦	11¼	...	...	-2.1
2373	1543	**Johnson Math**	1767½	- 14½	...	22.2
1601	1180	**Mondi**‡	1308	+ 12	...	10.0
110	77½	Robinson♦	92½	...	...	...
368½	241¾	**DS Smith**‡	294	- 10½	...	16.7
726½	522¾	Swire Pacific	591⅞	+ 17⅞	...	...
17¼	6⅝	Symph Environ♦	8	...	...	...
192⅝	45	Synthomer	45	- 15¾	...	0.9
2512⅜	2011	Takeda Pharm	2466	+ 1	...	13.8
7	1⅜	Velocys♦	1⅜	...	...	-1.8
1913	1338	Victrex	1497	- 10	...	17.8
640	397½	Wynnstay Group♦	412½	...	...	9.4
410	233	Zotefoams‡	350	- 3	...	21.0

Leisure

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
126⅝	51⅝	888 Hldgs	125½	+ ¼	...	9.2
846	542	Accesso Tech♦	697	- 6	...	18.3
680	370	Best of the Best♦	530	...	...	5.9
1356½	501⅜	Carnival	1073	- 10½	...	-1.7
132½	108	Celtic♦	125	- 2½	...	12.3
7	¼	Cineworld#	⅜	...	...	...
424½	215⅛	Domino's Pizza‡	388½	- 5½	...	19.8
1587½	1083	**Entain**‡	1130½	- 28	...	25.2
16725	9694	**Flutter Ent**	13945	- 15	...	...
38	23	Gaming Realms♦	35¾	- ½	...	...
290	290	Heavitree♦	290	...	...	17.4
185	65	Heavitree A♦	150	...	...	9.0
145	90	Hermes Pacific♦	90	- 20	...	...
6074	4275	**InterContinental Hotels**‡	6074	+ 8	...	56.8
1¼	¾	Minoan Gp♦	⅞	...	...	-6.2
236⅛	102	Mitch & Butlers	216⅛	+ ¾	...	...
189½	82¾	On The Beach	94¾	+ 2¾	...	-4.9
1435	1005	PPHE Hotels	1095	+ 20	...	-8.9
104⅜	52⅜	Rank Grp	82	- 3	...	11.0
51⅛	26⅝	Restaurant Gp	44⅛	+ 1½	...	-8.3
50½	32½	Rotala♦	42½	- 1	...	...
175	...	Sportech♦	96⅜	+ 1	...	...
281⅛	184¾	SSP	227½	- ¾	...	-4.4
5¾	1¾	Tasty♦	2¼	...	...	3.1
295	62½	Tintra♦#	67½	...	...	-1.1
704⅜	290⅝	Tui	463½	+ 4¾	...	-4.8
2⅜	1⅛	Webis Holdings♦	1⅜	...	...	...
783½	389¾	Wetherspoon JD	680	+ 3½	...	-6.3
3557	2285	**Whitbread**	3557	+ 3	...	...
1240	870	Young & Co - A♦	1120	- 30	...	...
892	564	Young & Co - N/V♦	790	+ 2	...	...

Media

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
88	68	Aeorema Comms♦	76½	...	...	21.1
51	21	Altitude Group♦	51	...	...	...
94	63½	Arcontech Grp♦	94	+ 6½	...	13.0
281	176⅛	Ascential	198¼	- 1	...	...
669	486⅛	**Auto Trader**‡	599⅜	+ 3¾	...	29.5
492	366	Bloomsbury Pub	404	+ 4	...	16.6
8	⅜	Bonhill Group♦	⅝	- ⅛	...	-1.5
172½	87	Catalyst Media♦	119	- 1	...	...
¼	...	Catenae♦	⅛	...	...	-0.2
...	...	DCD Media♦#	100	- 30	...	5.0
58½	43	Ebiquity♦	46	...	...	...
1818	643	Future	724½	- 14½	...	12.4
196	144⅞	GlobalData♦‡	153½	- ½	...	7.6
120¾	50	Hyve Group	120½	...	...	...
196	69⅜	IG Design Grp♦	132½	...	...	19.4
776	506½	**Informa**‡	732⅜	+ 1½	...	...
90	55⅛	ITV	70	- ½	...	7.5
9¾	4⅛	Jaywing♦	4¾	...	...	...
4	1½	Live Company Gp♦#	2	...	...	-0.4
171	83½	ME Group	154⅛	- 4¾	...	26.9
...	...	Mediazest♦	...	...	...	-4.5
46½	26½	Merit Grp♦	45	+ ½	...	...
45	1½	Mirada♦	1½	- 1⅜	...	...
58	38½	Mission Group♦	41	...	...	6.9
280⅜	172⅜	Moneysupermarket‡	249⅜	+ 1⅜	...	25.4
1706⅛	1179¾	News Corp A	1683⅞	- 16	...	27.4
1743¼	1205	News Corp B	1725⅞	- 18	...	28.1
1112	554	Next 15 Group♦	620	- 5	...	...
995⅛	754	**Pearson**‡	865	+ 4⅜	...	41.3
4⅜	2	Primorus Inv♦	3	...	...	5.5
198	107½	Quarto	115	...	...	6.4
120⅝	66¼	Reach‡	72¾	+ ⅝	...	80.8
1½	¾	REACT Grp♦	1½	+ ⅛	...	22.1
2722	2157	**Relx**‡	2695	+ 58	...	35.5
637¾	445⅜	**Rightmove**	560⅜	- 4¾	...	31.7
101⅞	65	SpaceandPeople♦	78½	+ 1	...	...
315	190	STV Group	190	- 2	...	4.6
230	122½	System1 Group♦	215	...	...	10.2
2929⅜	2223	21st Cent Fox Inc A	2488⅛	- 26¾	...	13.6
2711½	2096¾	21st Cent Fox Inc B	2295⅜	- 28	...	12.5
...	...	Vela Tech♦	...	...	...	6.3
356	257	Wilmington	310	- 10	...	19.7
1051½	725¾	**WPP**	755	- 10	...	14.3
112½	77½	Zinc Media♦	80	...	...	-5.0

Natural resources

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
¾	⅜	ADM Energy♦	½	...	...	...
⅛	...	Advance Energy♦#	⅛	...	...	-0.1
29½	11¼	AFC Energy♦	16⅝	- 1⅛	...	...
31	20½	Afentra PLC♦#	24¼	...	...	...
⅛	...	Alba Mineral Res♦	...	...	...	-2.0
⅝	⅛	Alien Metals♦	⅛	...	...	-5.3
87⅜	52⅝	Alumina	52⅝	- 1¼	...	10.9
1¼	⅞	Aminex	1	...	...	-6.4
1¾	...	Amur Mins Corp♦	...	...	...	-2.0
726273⅞	2512¼	Anglo Amer Plat	2512¼	- 71¼	...	1.8
3672½	1970	**Anglo American**‡	2025½	- 60½	...	4.0
121	56½	Anglo Asian Mng♦	57	- ½	...	4.9
1805	1042½	**Antofagasta**‡	1465	- 31	...	15.1
4⅜	2⅜	Arc Minerals♦	3½	+ ⅝	...	2.5
3½	2	Ariana Res♦	2¾	...	...	3.7
⅝	¼	Arkle Resources♦	¼	...	...	-1.0
2⅜	¾	Armadale Cap♦	¾	...	...	...
1⅝	⅞	Asiamet Rsrcs♦	1⅛	...	...	...
380	188	Atalaya Mine♦‡	326	+ 4	...	4.1
¼	...	Baron Oil♦	...	...	...	...
4¾	1⅜	Beowulf Mining♦	1½	...	...	-6.5
...	...	Bezant Res♦	...	...	...	-0.7
2855	2052	BHP Group‡	2223	- 107	...	9.7
5⅜	1¾	Border & Sthn Pet♦	2	...	...	...
20⅜	13¼	Bougainville	17⅞	+ ¾	...	...
4½	⅞	BowLeven♦	1¾	...	...	-2.2
567½	430	**BP**‡	514¾	- 1	...	18.6
16⅝	6½	Cadence Min♦	6¾	...	...	0.6
2½	1½	Cadogan Petrol	1¾	...	...	24.3
1350	775	Caledonia Mining♦	800	- 10	...	7.8
555¼	162	Capricorn Energy	168¾	- ⅛	...	1.3
8⅜	2¼	Caspian Sunrise♦	3	...	...	91.1
125½	83	Centamin‡	86⅝	+ ¾	...	13.4
292½	175½	Cent Asia Metals♦	200½	- 1	...	5.8
14½	5½	Chaarat Gold♦	5½	- ¾	...	...
19⅞	13⅜	Chariot Oil & Gas♦	14	- ¼	...	...
4	1¼	China Nonferr Gold♦	1¾	+ ¼	...	...
⅛	...	Clontarf Energy♦	...	...	...	-1.5
34½	15¼	Condor Gld♦	21	- 1¼	...	...
⅜	⅛	Corcel♦	¼	...	...	-0.3
10244⅜	76	DRD Gold	76	- 2¼	...	8.9
1⅛	¼	ECR Minerals♦	¼	...	...	-1.7
1⅜	⅝	Empyrean Energy♦	⅞	...	...	-6.4
2184	1461	**Endeavour**‡	1555	- 33	...	23.1
31½	14	EnQuest	15	- ⅛	...	0.9
7⅛	2¼	Eurasia Mining♦	2⅞	+ ⅛	...	...
3	⅞	Europa Oil&Gas♦	1⅛	...	...	11.1
175	74⅛	Ferrexpo	74⅛	...	...	0.5
968	509⅛	**Fresnillo**‡	552	- 5⅛	...	13.0
...	...	G3 Exploration#	28	...	...	-2.6
39	14½	Galantas Gold♦	14½	- 1	...	-2.4
7¼	1⅞	GCM Resources♦	2	...	...	-1.7
36⅝	15¾	Gem Diamonds	17	...	...	1.7
20¼	8⅜	Getech♦	8⅝	...	...	-2.0
578	411⅜	**Glencore**‡	423½	- 5⅞	...	15.5
⅜	⅛	Global Petrol♦	⅛	...	...	-1.5
134673½	976⅜	Gold Fields	976⅜	- 6⅝	...	15.0
12½	6½	Goldplat♦	6½	...	...	5.0
8⅛	2⅛	Goldstone Res♦#	2⅛	...	...	-9.9
9⅛	5⅞	Greatld Gld♦	5⅞	- ⅛	...	...
96½	70	Griffin Mining♦	81⅞	+ ½	...	9.0
253½	91¼	Gulf Keystone	91¼	+ ⅝	...	5.7
25⅞	5⅝	Harland & Wolff Gp♦	15¼	- ¼	...	1.2
94⅞	51½	Hochschild	85⅛	+ 1⅛	...	8.2
172	85	Horizonte Minrls♦	133½	+ 1	...	...
351½	197⅜	Hunting PLC	256½	- 2	...	-6.5
¼	...	Independ Res♦#	...	...	...	...
280	125	Indus Gas♦	141	...	...	14.6
⅜	¼	Ironveld♦	¼	...	...	-4.3
179⅜	66¾	ITM Power♦	79	- 2½	...	...
14	6¼	Jubilee Metals♦	7	+ ⅛	...	5.8
4¾	1⅝	Karel Diamd Res♦	4½	...	...	...
1	½	KEFI Gold and Copper♦	½	...	...	-2.3
493	380½	Kenmare Res	415½	- 4½	...	4.8
9	8⅝	Lamprell#	8⅞	...	...	-0.7
20	8¼	Landore Res♦	10¼	- ¾	...	-2.3
½	...	Lansdowne O&G♦	...	...	...	-2.8
15	10	Leeds Group♦	10	...	...	-1.6
8¾	3⅛	Lexington Gold♦	6	- ⅛	...	...
21½	7¼	MC Mining♦	7¾	...	...	-1.6
2¼	¾	Metals Explorn♦	2	...	...	3.5
¼	⅛	Nostra Terra♦	⅛	...	...	-1.0
26½	⅛	Nostrum O&G	11½	- ¾	...	-0.1
...	...	Oil Search	218⅞	- 5⅜	...	60.3
...	...	Oilex♦#	⅛	...	...	-3.7
⅛	...	Oriole Resources♦	...	...	...	-1.0
⅞	½	Ormonde Mining♦#	¾	...	...	-3.1
17⅛	3	Orosur Mining♦	3	...	...	-4.6
20⅛	12	Pan African Res♦	13⅞	...	...	4.5
128⅝	10½	Pantheon Res♦	22⅞	+ 3⅛	...	...
67⅜	13	Parkmead Grp♦	17¾	- ¼	...	-1.5
¾	¼	Pathfinder Mins♦	⅜	...	...	-3.9
120	64¾	Petra Diamonds	70	...	...	2.3
2	⅞	Petrel Resources♦	1	...	...	-5.3
7	1⅝	Petro Matad♦	3¾	+ ¼	...	...
125½	46	Petrofac	75¼	+ 2¾	...	-1.9
1	...	Petroneft Res♦#	...	...	...	-0.2
...	...	Petropavlovsk#	1⅛	- ⅛	...	1.6
7½	5½	Phoenix Global♦	6½	+ ¼	...	-1.6
15¾	1⅝	Plexus Holdings♦	15¾	...	...	-3.9
350	150	Polymetal Intl#	215	+ 50	...	...
698	499	Porvair	602	- 16	...	23.1
19¼	5¼	Prospex Energy♦	6¼	- ¼	...	-8.3
14⅝	8¼	Proton Motor Power S♦	8¼	...	...	-1.5
3½	3¼	Providence Res♦	3¼	...	...	29.0
2¾	⅞	Quadrise♦	1	...	...	-3.9
21	2	Rambler Met&Min♦#	5⅜	...	...	0.1
⅜	...	Reabold Resources♦	...	...	...	-1.7
½	⅛	Red Rock Res♦	⅛	...	...	-0.7
6564⅛	4486½	Rio Tinto Ltd	5780	- 147⅛	...	6.0
6377	4486	**Rio Tinto**‡	4847	- 131½	...	5.0
41⅛	12½	San Leon Energy♦#	16½	+ 1½	...	6.1
½	⅛	Scirocco Energy♦	⅜	...	...	...
38½	21½	Serabi Gold♦	24	+ ½	...	3.2
390	198⅜	Serica Energy♦	255¾	+ ⅛	...	...
13½	8¾	Shanta Gold♦	10⅛	- ⅛	...	6.4
2604½	2200½	**Shell**‡	2502	+ 13	...	13.1
...	...	Shuka Minerals♦	13½	+ ¼	...	-0.9
2	⅞	Sound Energy♦	⅞	...	...	5.5
106½	10	Star Energy♦	10	- ⅜	...	-0.5
⅛	...	Sunrise Resources♦	...	...	...	...
¼	...	Tertiary Minerals♦	...	...	...	-3.0
6½	1⅝	Thor Mining♦	1¾	...	...	...
5241⅞	3832	Total Eng SE	5019⅛	- 30	...	11.4
¼	...	Tower Resources♦	...	...	...	-0.7
50⅞	22½	Tullow Oil	37¾	- ⅛	...	3.7
...	...	UK Oil & Gas♦	...	...	...	-1.2
222	125	URU Metals♦	125	...	...	4.0
¾	⅛	Vast Res♦	¼	...	...	...
...	...	Victoria Oil&Gas♦#	3¾	...	...	-1.8
...	...	W Resources♦#	2⅝	...	...	-0.3
3¼	1⅞	Westmount Engy♦	2	...	...	-0.4
226	104½	Wood Grp (J)	163¼	+ 1⅜	...	-6.7
4½	¼	Woodbois♦	½	...	...	2.2
3½	1⅛	Xtract Resources♦	1¼	...	...	-2.4
7¼	3	Zephyr Energy♦	3⅝	...	...	-4.6

Professional & support services

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
5350	3280	4imprint Grp‡	4890	- 5	...	82.5
657½	460	Andrews Sykes♦	630	...	...	20.1
5874	3829	**Ashtead**‡	5166	- 68	...	25.1
7¾	⅞	Asimilar Group♦	1	...	...	...
78½	38	AssetCo♦	39	...	...	0.2
55	38½	Avisen♦	50	...	...	...
148	117	Begbies Traynor♦	119½	+ 2	...	...
226	154½	Blancco Tech♦	226	...	...	81.0
3225	2664	**Bunzl**	2800	- 13	...	21.2
42⅝	16⅛	Capita	16⅛	- ⅜	...	1.2
41½	36	CEPS♦	41	+ 2	...	-9.3
160	105	Christie Group♦	107½	...	...	45.7
2235	1788½	**Compass**	2001	+ 14½	...	48.6
252	97	CPPGroup♦	157½	- 1½	...	...
70	45	Croma Security♦	49½	+ 1½	...	7.1
5066	4030	**DCC**	4382	+ 93	...	14.4
104	30	De La Rue	55⅞	+ 1⅞	...	7.3
3308	2226	Diploma	3144	- 8	...	56.2
938	626	Discoverie	730	- 9	...	59.8
34	23½	Driver Group♦	27½	- 2	...	13.1
252	145½	Essentra	145½	- 1¾	...	16.3
3160	2552	**Experian**	2772	- 15	...	35.5
12680	9094	Ferguson	12370	- 115	...	18.2
274	225	FIH Group♦	242	...	...	...
10⅝	5	Grafenia♦	9	- ¼	...	-6.6
485	317	Hargeaves Serv♦	475	+ 2½	...	4.9
735	465	Impellam Grp♦	700	+ 5	...	38.2
7½	4	Ince G♦#	5⅛	...	...	2.9
4528	3619	**Intertek**	4137	- 3	...	23.2
197⅝	115⅜	IWG	172½	- ½	...	-6.5
130¾	77	Johnson Srvce♦	130¾	+ 1⅛	...	81.7
197	106	Journeo♦	190½	+ 3½	...	42.7
90	56½	Kier Gp	87	+ ⅜	...	8.4
1360	1080	Latham (J)♦	1115	+ 5	...	6.1
1015	695	Lok'n Store♦	732	- 4	...	22.2
3400	2300	Lon Security♦	3000	+ 50	...	16.5
343	220	LSL Prop Services	240	...	...	6.6
119	86	Macfarlane	110½	+ ½	...	12.8
261	90	Maintel Hldgs♦	165	...	...	5.0
2000	8¼	Malvern Intl♦	24½	- ½	...	...
292	185	Mears Group	276	+ ½	...	24.0
...	...	Menzies (John)	607	- 1	...	48.0
103⅜	61½	Mitie Gp	103⅜	+ 2½	...	51.7
13¾	3¾	MobilityOne♦	4¾	...	...	3.5
56½	25	Newmark Sec♦	54	...	...	...
6½	3½	Norm Broadbent♦	5½	- ¼	...	...
62½	37	Northern Bear♦‡	54½	...	...	5.5
286	218½	NWF Grp♦	235	+ 7	...	...
491½	362⅛	PageGroup‡	404¾	+ 3¾	...	10.9
61½	45½	PCI-PAL♦	47	...	...	-9.7
11½	6¾	Petards♦	6⅞	...	...	12.5
24	12½	PHSC♦	22½	...	...	40.9
1⅞	⅜	PowerHouse Egy♦	½	...	...	-0.9
98	66	Record	77⅜	+ ⅜	...	21.2
437½	283½	Redde Northgate‡	329½	+ ½	...	8.2
760	555	Renew Hldgs♦	721	- 5	...	17.8
756	450	Renewi	478	+ 10½	...	10.1
655⅛	465	**Rentokil**‡	588⅛	+ 2½	...	41.7
431	125	Restore♦	203	- 2	...	24.1
610	412½	Ricardo	526	+ 2	...	46.9
600	355	Robert Walters‡	365	- 3	...	8.3
20	11	Roebuck Food Grp♦	13½	+ ½	...	2.0
239	207	RPS Group	221	- 1	...	...
1118	696½	**RS Group**	739⅛	- 10⅜	...	18.7
53½	16	RTC Group♦	51½	- 2	...	...
408⅜	226⅛	RWS Hldgs♦	236	- 2¾	...	21.6
431	365	Science Group♦	410	...	...	18.8
180⅛	136⅞	Serco‡	150⅜	- 2¼	...	6.1
57½	27½	Smiths News	42¼	+ ⅜	...	4.1
3596	2452	**Smurfit Kappa**	3096	- 122	...	14.1
44	25⅜	Staffline Gp♦	30	...	...	23.0
484½	332	SThree	351½	+ 6½	...	11.3
137½	102½	Synectics♦	112½	...	...	...
31	21⅝	Thruvision Group♦	28	...	...	...
85	35	Tribal♦	44½	+ ¼	...	13.9
87	49	Vianet♦	78½	- ½	...	...
803	535	Vp	540	...	...	13.3
2⅜	1⅛	Westminster♦	1⅜	...	...	-1.7

Real estate

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
131¼	95½	Shaftesbury Cap‡	116	+ 1	...	34.1

Retailing

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
100½	41⅜	AO World	94⅞	- 1⅞	...	...
590½	295½	**B&M European**	558⅜	+ 1⅜	...	12.9
42⅝	20¼	Brown (N)♦	22¾	+ 1	...	6.7
112½	40⅜	Card Factory	103¾	+ 1½	...	...
2192	1591	CVS Group♦	1713	- 373	...	47.9
165	104¾	DFS Furn	111⅜	+ 1	...	5.9
1275	670½	Dunelm	1125	- 7	...	15.1
899	621	**Frasers Group**	801½	- 3	...	35.6
2904	1673	Greggs‡	2370	- 72	...	20.7
226⅛	126½	Halfords‡	191½	- ⅝	...	6.3
759⅛	480⅞	Howden Joinery	734⅜	+ ¾	...	13.8
941	675	Inchcape	766	- 2	...	25.8
4⅛	1⅝	IQ-AI	4	- ¼	...	...
186⅝	89⅛	**JD Sports**	134¼	- 5	...	16.2
291½	203	**Kingfisher**	225½	- 2	...	5.6
129⅛	61½	Lookers‡	128½	...	...	8.2
231½	93⅛	Marks & Spencer	220½	- 3	...	...
11⅛	5	Mothercare♦	5	...	...	-3.1
145	60	Naked Wines♦	71½	+ ½	...	...
7228	4383	**Next**	6992	- 16	...	13.3
976⅜	343⅜	**Ocado**	823⅜	- 23½	...	...
28⅜	14⅞	Pendragon	18¼	...	...	5.7
397½	257¾	Pets at Home	343⅛	- 35⅜	...	14.0
188½	72⅞	Saga	136	- 3⅜	...	...
289½	169⅞	**Sainsbury's**	264½	- ⅞	...	22.2
1714	1132½	WH Smith	1395	+ 5	...	...
27¼	14¼	Sosandar♦	23	+ ¼	...	...
...	...	Studio Retail#	115	- 2½	...	2.4
284½	199⅛	**Tesco**	255½	- 1½	...	13.0
56⅜	38	Topps Tiles	49⅛	- ½	...	8.9

Technology

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
100½	59	Access Intell♦	59	...	...	-8.1
133½	9½	Aferian plc♦	17	+ 2½	...	3.0
196½	126	Alfa Financial	157	+ 1	...	24.5
13¾	8¼	Allied Minds	13¾	+ 3⅛	...	-1.2
420	268	Aptitude Software	281	- 6	...	31.5
265	162½	Bango♦	162½	...	...	...
33	21	BATM Adv Coms	27⅜	+ 1	...	11.5
38	14¼	Berkeley Res	20	- ⅜	...	-8.5
20	5¾	Blackbird♦	8¾	- ¼	...	...
1¼	¾	CloudCoCo Group♦	¾	...	...	-1.8
2474	1810	Computacenter	2156	- 36	...	13.4
87	55½	Concurrent Tech♦	74	+ 2	...	17.5
11½	5¾	Corero♦	6¼	...	...	...
2250	1080	Craneware♦	1530	+ 45	...	69.7
3¼	1¾	Crimson Tide♦	2⅜	...	...	16.3
24	11¼	CyanConn Hldgs♦	15	- ¼	...	...
261½	157½	D4t4 Solutions♦	190	...	...	22.5
21	13	Dillistone Group♦	13½	...	...	-3.9
⅜	⅛	EQTEC♦	⅛	...	...	-1.8
870	518	FDM Group	558	- 9	...	19.3
18	10¾	Filtronic♦	16½	...	...	44.5
2165	1230	First Derivts♦	1562	- 14	...	...
647	213¾	GB Group♦	222	- 2	...	16.9
180½	135	GreshamTech	149	- 2½	...	...
78	24¼	Ilika♦	40¼	...	...	...
132½	91	Ingenta♦	116½	...	...	68.1
77	38	Intercede♦	52	...	...	17.9
189⅜	112	Iomart♦‡	177¾	- 2¾	...	19.5
59⅞	16⅝	IQE♦	16⅝	- ¼	...	...
134½	112½	K3 Business Tch♦	123	...	...	-2.1
1657¼	1025⅞	LG Electronics	1394½	- 40	...	3.7
⅛	⅛	Location Sciences♦#	⅛	...	...	-2.3
58	42	MTI Wireless♦	44½	+ ½	...	14.8
55¾	17	Nanoco Gp	17½	- ¼	...	...
116½	74	Netcall♦	81½	+ 1½	...	...
49½	35	Northamber♦	45½	...	...	...
25¾	10¼	Online Blockchain♦	12	...	...	-6.3
119	80½	Oxford Metrics♦	100½	...	...	43.7
8½	2¾	Parity♦	2¾	...	...	-4.0
41½	28½	Pennant Intl♦	38	...	...	...
634½	390¾	Playtech	523½	- 1	...	5.5
379¾	297⅛	QinetiQ	335½	+ 2⅜	...	26.2
92	20½	RM	61⅞	- ¼	...	12.3
1009	679¾	**Sage**	1009	+ 18½	...	38.6
7⅝	5	Seeing Machines♦	5¾	...	...	...
116½	37	Shearwater Grp♦	43½	...	...	26.9
54	31½	Smartspace S'ware♦	43½	...	...	-4.5
1534	1071	Softcat	1497	- 30	...	29.3
286⅛	144⅝	Spirent Comms‡	144⅝	- 4	...	13.4
68	24¾	SRT Marine♦	49½	...	...	...
572½	362⅞	Tele. Ericsson	416¾	- 2⅞	...	7.6
112½	72½	Touchstar♦	97½	- 7½	...	...
1000	746	Tracsis♦	746	+ 1	...	95.0
20½	12¼	Trakm8♦	17	...	...	...
165	81	Triad Grp	130	...	...	14.2
1380	49	Wandisco♦	66½	- 4¼	...	-1.2
765	400	Water Intel♦	400	...	...	22.0
220	144½	Xaar	180½	- 4½	...	...
6¼	⅛	Yourgene♦	½	...	...	-0.3
207½	59	Zoo Digital♦	62	- 1	...	...

Telecoms

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
200½	100	AdEPT Technology♦‡	200½	...	...	...
144	103⅝	**Airtel Africa**	113¼	- 2⅜	...	10.1
160¼	112	**BT Group**‡	114	...	...	11.0
85¼	47⅞	Currys plc	48⅜	- ⅜	...	2.2
1210	1012	Gamma Comms♦	1104	+ 4	...	20.0
128⅛	82	Helios Towers	87⅜	- ¼	...	-7.8
2215½	1003	Just Eat T'away	1003	- 27	...	-2.1
¼	...	Mobile Streams♦	...	...	...	-1.3
2¼	⅝	Mobile Tornado♦	1½	...	...	-8.8
2500	1464	Telecom Plus	1550	...	...	39.7
113¾	70	**Vodafone**	73⅞	+ ½	...	...

Transport

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
340	224	Braemar Ship#	233	+ 3	...	7.7
528	285	EasyJet	426⅞	+ 5⅞	...	-2.6
6⅞	2⅜	Esken Limited	3½	...	...	-0.1
155½	93½	FirstGroup	153⅜	+ 2⅝	...	36.5
425	251	Fisher (James)	350	- 2	...	-6.3
173½	93⅝	**International Airlines**	154⅝	+ ⅞	...	-3.4
272⅜	183⅛	IDS	249¾	- ½	...	2.8
439¼	322	Irish Cont Uts	393	...	...	...
1381½	667¾	Jet2♦	1091	+ 65	...	-5.8
198⅞	75⅜	Mobico Group	87⅝	+ 1⅜	...	-5.2
1035	820	Ocean Wilson	950	- 24	...	4.8
...	...	Stagecoach	104⅝	...	...	14.7
24	17	Sutton Harbour♦	17½	...	...	...
372	192⅜	Wincanton	235	+ ½	...	6.3
3158	1357½	Wizz Air	2057	- 33	...	-4.6

Utilities

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
159¼	67¼	**Centrica**	159¼	+ 3¼	...	16.0
256½	249	ContourGlobal	251	+ ½	...	28.3
750	473⅜	Drax Group‡	540½	- 1¾	...	40.0
555	432	Jersey Electricity	450	...	...	8.5
1162	858⅜	**National Grid**	994¾	+ 21½	...	23.1
9¾	5⅝	OPG Power♦	8⅜	...	...	5.4
1000	609½	Pennon	609½	- 7½	...	44.1
¾	¼	Rurelec♦	½	...	...	-0.4
2975	2213	**Severn Trent**	2410	+ 42	...	...
1900	1428	**SSE**‡	1617½	+ 27½	...	6.3
1102½	828⅛	**United Utilities**	944⅜	+ 17⅜	...	86.6

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Mon 19 — **Fly from London to New York, USA**
Upon arrival, transfer to a 4★ hotel‡ for your four night stay

Tue 20 - Thu 22 — **New York City, New York, USA**
New York is arguably the biggest, tallest and most exciting city anywhere in the world! Its legendary sights uniquely define a larger-than-life metropolis whose sheer style and energy will surpass every expectation. With no luggage restrictions on your return journey you can shop 'til you drop in the range of stores. Times Square is a frenetic intersection of light, sound and people. Central Park is an oasis of green in the shadow of a forest of skyscrapers, and Grand Central Station is a beautiful portal to the cultural and financial capital of the world

Fri 23 — **New York City, New York, USA**
Transfer to the port and embark the iconic *Queen Mary 2* for her **400th Transatlantic voyage**

Sat 24 - Thu 29 — ***Relaxing at sea***
Queen Mary 2 has a timeless appeal, combining a wonderful sense of glamorous history and modern style. Perhaps begin your voyage with the famous afternoon tea in the Queens Room, or take a seat in Illuminations and enjoy a 3D film, planetarium show or famous Insights speaker.

Enjoy a Martini mixology class or whisky tasting in the Commodore Club or Lunch & Learn in The Verandah Restaurant where Cunard's Sommeliers will guide you through a chosen topic as you tuck into a three-course lunch××. Alternatively, take part in a wine tasting experience×× in the Britannia Restaurant – hosted by the Chief Sommelier on board.

If you are looking for the ultimate relaxation then why not use your on board spend to treat yourself to a day at the Mareel Wellness & Beauty Spa and indulge in a variety of treatments××

Fri 30 — **Arrive in Southampton**

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Obituaries

Roger Ordish

Long-serving BBC producer of Jim'll Fix It who knew the show's notorious presenter as well as anyone but never 'got behind the mask'

Roger Ordish admitted that he knew Sir Jimmy Savile as well as anyone — but added ruefully that meant almost not at all.

It was why, despite being Savile's producer on *Jim'll Fix It* for the entirety of its 19-year run, he had no idea that the show's presenter was a serial paedophile. "He succeeded in hoodwinking a prime minister, the Vatican, police forces and members of the BBC staff, including me," Ordish said. "He was a manipulative man and spent his whole life hiding things. You never really got behind the mask."

When the extent of Savile's crimes emerged in 2012, almost a year after his death, via the ITV programme *Exposure: the Other Side of Jimmy Savile*, Ordish expressed shock but resented the implication that he must have known and been part of a cover-up.

"He was creepy, yes, but it never crossed my mind there was any paedophilia going on," he told the inquiry set up by the BBC under Dame Janet Smith and in which he became a key witness.

She asked if he felt he "ought" to have known. "If someone had come to me and said a specific thing had happened, a complaint about Jimmy Savile's behaviour, I would have immediately done something about it," he said.

"I always found his behaviour rather odd, but you're not thinking, 'Is Jimmy Savile a paedophile?' You're just thinking, 'That's Jimmy Savile'."

In her 372,000-word report, Smith found the BBC missed opportunities to stop Savile molesting boys and girls and identified 72 victims, eight of whom were raped, but concluded there was no evidence that the BBC as a corporate body was aware of Savile's conduct.

She also accepted that Ordish "did not consciously realise that Savile was or might be an abuser of young people" and described him as honest and decent but a little naive. He had known that Savile had "very questionable morals" and had "proclaimed his interest in casual sex with women very much younger than himself", she said, expressing her amazement that it had never occurred to Ordish that Savile was not a suitable role model for the young audiences of *Jim'll Fix It*.

Ironically, it transpired that it had occurred to Ordish — and when the show was being planned he had argued within the BBC against Savile being its presenter and had proposed Monty Modlyn instead, albeit for reasons other than any suspicion of sexual abuse.

Ordish first met Savile in the late 1960s when he was briefly a producer on *Top of the Pops* and then produced *Clunk-Click*, presented by Savile, which ran for 20 episodes in 1973 and 1974. Several of Savile's accusers claimed their abuse occurred when they were young guests on *Clunk-Click*. Among the celebrities who appeared on the show was Gary Glitter, who would later be imprisoned for child sex abuse.

When Bill Cotton, the head of BBC Light Entertainment, proposed replacing *Clunk-Click* with *Jim'll Fix It*, Ordish told him that the concept for the show was "brilliant" but that Savile was the wrong person to front it.

"That was nothing to do with his moral behaviour," he admitted. "It had to do with his ability to communicate



JON PLAYER/NEWS GROUP NEWSPAPERS LTD

Ordish, left, and his first wife Oriel with Savile on their wedding day; Ordish in the Jim'll Fix It production office at the BBC in 1983, right; he had argued against Savile, below, being presenter



with young people. I felt he was inept at interviewing and had no rapport with his subjects. He was too self-centred — which may be characteristic of a psychopath — so I asked Bill to consider someone else as a presenter."

Ordish even took Modlyn out to lunch to ask him if he would be prepared to take the job. The answer was yes, but Cotton was not for turning and so *Monty'll Fix It* never came to pass.

When the programme launched with Savile in 1975, Ordish instructed his team that the presenter should not be

'I did think Savile's presence was unnerving for some children'

left alone with the children who appeared on the show. "But that would apply to any presenter because the rules were a young person should always be chaperoned," he explained. "It wasn't for fear he was going to do something awful to the child, although I did think his presence was unnerving for some children."

Ordish produced the show until 1994, during which time he claimed that Savile's dressing-room door was always kept open.

He even had the presenter to stay at his home, where Savile slept in the room next to his 14-year-old daughter's bedroom. "That is not the act of someone turning a blind eye," he protested.

According to Ordish, Savile himself had little to do with the programme beyond presenting. The producer and his team sorted the 350,000 requests sent to the show every year and set up the fixes and when Savile arrived in the studio at lunchtime to record the show he would ask his producer: "What have you fixed for me today?"

In a foreword Savile wrote for Ordish's 1992 book *The Jim'll Fix It Story*, which was basically a compendium of the show's most inventive stunts, he called Ordish "Dr Magic".

Appalled as he was by Savile's crimes, Ordish regretted that the programmes he had devoted so much of his working life to making had since been made unavailable.

"*Jim'll Fix It* was my baby and its huge success thrilled me," he said. "Now the programme has been airbrushed from history but I refuse to let that erase my memories."

He noted sadly that in retirement he could no longer speak about his career at the BBC without a sense of shame. At one time when he told people he had produced *Jim'll Fix It* "you used to get a wonderful reaction. Now it's something I can't mention".

He is survived by his second wife Susie (née Wishlade), a sculptor whom he married in 1984 after they met when she was a contestant on a Paul Daniels show he was producing, by their daughter Louise, whom he always called Lulu, and stepson Tim. His first marriage to Oriel, a BBC researcher, ended in divorce.



Roger Francis Ordish was born in 1939 in Yalding, Kent, and enjoyed an idyllic country childhood, disturbed only by the sound of German bombers and doodlebugs overhead on the flight path to London. One of his earliest memories was picking up bits of a stray V2 that had landed in the apple orchard opposite the family home.

His mother Olive (née Harvey-James) was a theatre designer who also made pub signs for Whitbread, while his father George worked for ICI's agricultural division and was a pioneering English winemaker. In time, all but the north side of the Ordish house came to be covered in grapevines from which his father managed to make 60 gallons of wine a year. He also published a book titled *Wine Growing in England* with a cover photo of his eight-year-old son operating the wine press.

Educated at a prep school where he was the only boy and at Tonbridge School, where his best friend was the bookseller Tim Waterstone, he admitted to being a "lazy dreamer" in class but did well enough to earn a place at Trinity College Dublin, where he read economics and political science and was active in the drama society.

Spotted by a BBC executive in a student production, he was invited to apply for a traineeship and joined BBC Radio in 1964. After cutting his teeth as a producer on a magazine programme called *Roundabout* presented by the future Tory MP Tim Brinton, he moved briefly to the World Service and then in 1967 to BBC Television.

He remained there for 30 years, producing not only shows with Savile and Daniels but *Dee Time* with Simon Dee, Bruce Forsyth's *Generation Game* ("quite hairy because we never knew what he was going to do next"), *Call My Bluff* with Robert Robinson and Frank Muir, *A Bit Of Fry & Laurie* and talk shows with Kenneth Williams, Terry Wogan, Derek Nimmo and Michael Parkinson (obituary, August 17, 2023).

A committed bon viveur who enjoyed long lunches, he was not without a sense of humour and a hoax he played on the producers of the 1968 Eurovision Song Contest, in which he pretended to be the entrant from Albania demanding to know why he had been snubbed, has entered BBC folklore.

In later years he revelled in being something of an anti-woke grump, but he did it with a playful glint in his eye. "I'm all the things it is politically incorrect to be — English, male, white, middle class, privately educated, from the home counties, heterosexual and probably many more defects, too," he mocked with a provocative glee.

On retirement he moved to Lewes, East Sussex, where he sang with the local Gilbert and Sullivan society and made videos for clients including Kew Gardens and Arundel Castle.

In 2007 he moved to Foissac in France before returning to Britain in 2018 and settling in Richmond, North Yorkshire, where he volunteered in the village shop.

He was a skilled mimic — in the audiobook of his memoir *If I Remember Rightly* he essayed wicked imitations of celebrities — and an enthusiastic singer in local choirs.

Asked what he would have requested if he could have written to *Jim'll Fix It* himself, he replied that he would have asked to appear on stage in the chorus of a West End musical.

Roger Ordish, BBC producer, was born on October 13, 1939. He died of undisclosed causes on August 26, 2023, aged 83

Register

Jimmy Buffett

Singer-songwriter whose 1977 sun-bleached hit Margaritaville led to a vast business empire of restaurants, bars and hotels

Perhaps no song — not even Paul McCartney's *Yesterday* — ever made more money for its composer than Jimmy Buffett's *Margaritaville*.

The royalties from his dreamy, sun-bleached 1977 hit about the pleasures of loafing were decent enough but the song led to a business empire, transforming Buffett from a millionaire songwriter into an entrepreneurial billionaire.

Inspired by a lost afternoon spent drinking margaritas in a Mexican bar in Austin, Texas, the song became synonymous with a tropical island escapism in which the workaday cares of the city were left far behind and life proceeded at a more leisurely pace between beach and bar, sipping umbrella-garnished cocktails and "checkin' out chiquitas down by the shore".

From this languorous hippy aesthetic emerged a ferociously marketed brand that grew from a T-shirt shop and café to encompass 150 restaurants and bars bearing the Margaritaville name, along with more than 30 hotels and resorts across North America.

The Margaritaville logo could eventually be found on "casinos, cruises, waterparks, leisurewear, pickleball paddles, food, beer, furniture, frozen drink machines and even on a Florida retirement community", according to the Los Angeles Times.

Buffett was unabashed about swapping the beach for the boardroom. "I'm not about to apologise for being a good businessman — too many people in music have ruined their lives because they weren't," he said. "I'm just trying to work the system while maintaining my '60s anarchic soul."

To that end he kept his Hawaiian shirts, cut-off jeans and flip-flops and into his seventies continued recording and performing what he called his "drunken calypso rock'n'roll" for his army of similarly clad fans, known as Parrotheads. Taking their name from a line in his most famous song, they formed a fanbase as ardent in its devotion as the Grateful Dead's Deadheads.

"It's pure escapism is all it is," he said of his carefully cultivated persona and amiable mix of country, rock, folk and pop. "I think it's really a part of the human condition that you've got to have some fun. You've got to get away from whatever you do to make a living or other parts of life that stress you out." Other popular Buffett songs gloried in such hedonistic titles as *Cheeseburger in Paradise* (which gave its name to another chain of restaurants), *Where's the Party* and *Why Don't We Get Drunk*.

He was also an accomplished author whose book of stories *Tales from Margaritaville* and autobiography *A Pirate Looks at Fifty* topped The New York Times bestseller lists, giving him the rare distinction — alongside the likes of Ernest Hemingway and John Steinbeck — of being one of only six writers to have reached No 1 on both the fiction and nonfiction lists.

His plane, with Bono of U2 on board, was shot at by Jamaican police

He kept homes in the Florida Keys, on Long Island in New York, in Honolulu and on the Caribbean island of St Barts and could see the sea from all of them. Only a home in the ski resort of Aspen in Colorado broke the aquatic theme.

He is survived by his second wife, Jane (née Slagsvol), whom he met, appropriately, when she was a student on a spring break in Key West. She never went back to school and they married in 1977 but separated for a time in the 1980s when the partying lifestyle of living in Margaritaville got too much. They reconciled in 1991. "I'd been with Jimmy since I was a child, through the craziest times, and I didn't have a clue who I was," his wife said. "So I left for a while until I could get sober."

MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES



Buffett aimed to be good at business while "maintaining my '60s anarchic soul"

Buffett also sharpened up his act. "I could wind up like a lot of my friends did, burnt out or dead, or redirect the energy," he said in 1989. "It was fun, all that hard drinking, hard drugging. No apologies. But that period of my life is over."

He is also survived by their two daughters: Savannah Buffett, a radio show host, and Sarah Delaney, a filmmaker, and an adopted son, Cameron Marley. His first marriage to Margie Washichek between 1969 and 1972 ended in divorce.

Among his fans were Frank Sinatra, with whom he sang a duet on the great man's final album; Bob Dylan, who called him one of his "favourite songwriters"; McCartney, who played on Buffett's final recording, due for release next month; and the Eagles, who played at his wedding in 1977.

James William Buffett was born on Christmas Day 1946 in Pascagoula, Mississippi, the oldest of three children to Mary (née Peets), an assistant director of industrial relations, and James Buffett, an engineer with the United States army and later a government contracts manager. His grandfather, yet another James Buffett, had been a seaman whose tales instilled a watery wanderlust in his grandson, later celebrated in the songs *Son of a Son of a Sailor* and *The Pascagoula Run*, on which he sang: "It's time to see the world, it's time to kiss a girl, it's time to cross the wild meridian."

After the family had moved to Mobile, Alabama, he graduated from the McGill Institute and enrolled at Auburn University, where he learnt to play the guitar. Dropping out, he switched to the University of Southern Mississippi, where he completed a degree in history and journalism. On graduating in 1969, he moved to New Orleans where he busked on street corners and then to Nashville, where he worked as a music journalist for Billboard and recorded his first album.

By 1972 he had moved on again, settling in the Florida Keys where he sang in the local clubs and became the first mate on a local yacht, which he used to traffic a little marijuana if one is to believe his song *A Pirate Looks at Forty* on which he sang: "I've done a bit of smugglin', and I've run my share of grass."

He was also a licensed pilot and in 1996 his plane, with Bono of U2 on board along with his wife and children, was shot at by Jamaican police who erroneously suspected he was still indulging in drug running. Typically, he made a humorous song out of the incident, titled *Jamaica Mistaica*.

His second album, *A White Sport Coat and a Pink Crustacean* (1973), sold better than its predecessor and made enough money for him to buy his first boat, but it was his seventh album, *Changes in Latitudes, Changes in Attitudes* (1977), recorded with his group the Coral Reefer Band and which included *Margaritaville*, that elevated him to the realm of rock'n'roll aristocracy.

He opened his first restaurant, Jimmy Buffett's Margaritaville, in the Florida Keys in the mid-1980s and the franchise kept on expanding.

A jukebox musical titled *Escape to Margaritaville* made it to Broadway in 2018 but even Buffett was nonplussed when his invention became a real place with the Margaritaville retirement village in Daytona Beach, Florida.

"Who knew people actually wanted to live in Margaritaville?" he said. "I thought for a while it was a myth."

Jimmy Buffett, singer-songwriter and businessman, was born on December 25, 1946. He died of skin cancer on September 1, 2023, aged 76

Margaret Betts

Unassuming Bletchley Park machine operator who, after enlisting as a Wren at the age of 19, assisted Alan Turing's codebreakers

For more than 40 years Margaret Betts never breathed a word about her wartime service at Bletchley Park, the secret code-breaking centre in Buckinghamshire. "It was only when documentaries started to appear on the TV and books started to be published that eventually she said, 'You know, I was one of those'," her son Jonathan said.

In 1942 the 19-year-old Margaret Booth, as she then was, had a job with the Inland Revenue but found the work "rather boring". Her family's life was upended when her newly married brother, Pat, was reported missing presumed dead after his ship was sunk by a German U-boat. She recalled thinking to herself: "What am I doing here, just working on people's taxes?"

Determined to become involved in the war, she enlisted with the Women's Royal Naval Service (Wrens). She was sent for initial training at Mill Hill School, north London, where the recruits were constantly observed. "One day, we were all called out into the hall. Seven or eight of us were told to be ready to leave Mill Hill tomorrow," she said.

The next day she was summoned by "men in dark suits", recalling: "I was told I was going to do some very, very secret work and I must never, ever talk about it, and I had to carry this secret to the end of my life … he was very emphatic."

Betts had been selected to serve as a machine operator at Bletchley Park. She was introduced to the "bombe" decoding machine, taught how to feed in code and instructed to wait for a message to be identified. The drums whirred round and "every time it stopped we had to make a note of all the letters each one had stopped at". She then took the results to one of the decoders, who used a captured German Enigma machine to decipher the code.



Betts, in Davos in 1948, would become a keen traveller; during the war, right

It was, she insisted, humdrum work. "We were operating machines night and day … You just had to stand by the machines, you had to concentrate when you were programming it and make sure it was set up correctly, and the rest of the time you were there watching it, waiting for it to come up with something."

At first Betts was based at the Stanmore outstation in north London, recalling: "We used to dash up to London in our spare time, enjoying life." Later she was posted to Bletchley Park itself. "We were very fed up … stuck in the countryside," she said. "But looking back, we had far more fun." Hitchhiking became a popular way of getting around, though she was astonished that no one ever questioned what a Wren was doing on the rural lanes.

She told of parties at American airbases with handsome servicemen. "They had proper food, as in Britain there was rationing but the Americans didn't have it in the same way," she said. On other occasions she went shopping in Northampton, overhearing gossip and rumours about Bletchley Park, including that it was a home for Wrens who had become pregnant out of wedlock. The Wrens were not keen to be thought of in that way but, she added, the cover story "rather suited the authorities".



Betts insisted that she had been a small cog in a giant machine. "Please don't come away with the idea that we're all Alan Turings, because we're not," she said. "We were there operating the machines, we were obeying orders, we were applying logic to do what we were told to do and we were doing so efficiently and intelligently, but we didn't design the machines for decoding. We were the service staff who were operating them."

Margaret Booth was born in Ipswich in 1923, one of three children of Daniel Booth and his wife Dorothy (née Cubitt). Her brothers were Patrick and John. All three siblings won scholarships to Ipswich School. When war broke out her father joined the air ministry while her brothers signed up: Pat to the navy and John to the paratroopers.

In May 1945 she was in London to enjoy the VE Day celebrations but was asked to continue working on Japanese codes at Bletchley Park until VJ Day in August. Two years later she married Anthony Sneezum, whose family had founded a watchmaking business in Ipswich during the 1880s; they changed their surname to Betts. He never fully recovered from being held as a PoW by the Japanese.

They had five children: William, Helen, Clive, Jonathan and Alice. Anthony's trauma meant that she "ran the family", Jonathan said. For many years the only thing her children knew about her war service was that she worked in an office for the Royal Navy.

She taught at St John's Church Sunday school in Ipswich and after Anthony's death began to travel the world on her own. In her seventies she learnt Italian well enough to play Scrabble in the language but gave up on Sudoku puzzles because they were too easy. In her eighties she returned to visit Bletchley Park.

Asked by Jonathan in a video interview why it was not until the 1980s that she told him and his siblings about her contribution to the war effort, Betts replied: "Well, I signed the Official Secrets Act. We were told never to tell anyone. But it's obvious now people are all talking about it."

Margaret Betts, Bletchley Park machine operator, was born on December 27, 1923. She died on August 26, 2023, aged 99

Email: obituaries@thetimes.co.uk

Register

Court Circular

Balmoral Castle

7th September, 2023

The King was represented by the Lord Bridges (former Solicitor to The late Queen) at the Service of Thanksgiving for Sir Matthew Farrer (former Solicitor to The late Queen) which was held in St Magnus-the-Martyr, Lower Thames Street, London EC3, this afternoon.

The Princess Royal was represented by Vice Admiral Sir Tim Laurence.

Kensington Palace

7th September, 2023

The Prince of Wales, Joint Patron, the Royal Foundation of The Prince and Princess of Wales, today undertook the following engagements connected to the "Homewards" programme:

His Royal Highness this afternoon visited Pret a Manger, 14 Commercial Road, Bournemouth, Dorset.

The Prince of Wales later visited AFC Bournemouth, Vitality Stadium, Kings Park Drive, Bournemouth, and was received on arrival by His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Dorset (Mr Angus Campbell).

St James's Palace

7th September, 2023

The Duke of Edinburgh, Royal Honorary Colonel, Royal Wessex Yeomanry, this afternoon attended Annual Training at Salisbury Plain, Wiltshire.

The Duchess of Edinburgh, Patron, the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association, this morning received Mr Thomas Wright upon relinquishing his appointment as Chief Executive and Mr Andrew Lennox upon assuming the appointment.

St James's Palace

7th September, 2023

The Princess Royal, President, Riding for the Disabled Association, this morning visited Digswell Place Group, Digswell Place Stables, Rectory Road, Welwyn Garden City, to mark its Fiftieth Anniversary, and was received by Mr Anthony Chapman (Vice Lord-Lieutenant of Hertfordshire).

Her Royal Highness, President, UK Fashion and Textile Association, this afternoon visited MAES London Womenswear Manufacturer, the Archives, Unit 10 High Cross Centre, Fountayne Road, London N15, and was received by Captain Peter Baker (Deputy Lieutenant of Greater London).

The Princess Royal, Patron, South Georgia Heritage Trust, accompanied by Vice Admiral Sir Tim Laurence, this evening attended the Return of Sir Ernest Shackleton's Quest Crow's Nest Service at All Hallows by the Tower, Byward Street, London EC3, followed by a Dinner at Trinity House, Tower Hill, London EC3.

Kensington Palace

7th September, 2023

The Duke of Gloucester this afternoon received Mr Benjamin Derbyshire (Chairman, Hunt Thompson Associates Design) and Mr Christopher Dyson (Master, Architects Company).

His Royal Highness, Vice Patron, National Churches Trust, this evening attended a Dinner at C Hoare and Company, 37 Fleet Street, London EC4.

Readers' Lives



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ARE any among you in trouble? They should pray. Are any among you happy? They should sing praises. Are any among you sick? They should send for the church elders, who will pray for them and rub olive oil on them in the name of the Lord.
James 5.13–14 (GNB)

Bible verses are provided by the Bible Society

Forthcoming Marriages

MR S.M. DUNCAN AND THE HON E.K. BLOOMFIELD
The engagement is announced between Samuel, younger son of Mrs Jennifer Duncan and the late Mr Maurice Duncan of Auckland, New Zealand, and Eleanor, younger daughter of Mr Andrew and Baroness Bloomfield of Hinton Waldrist, Oxfordshire.

MR A. J. O. AZIS AND MISS L. C. HATTRELL
The engagement is announced between Arthur, son of Mr and Mrs Jonathan Azis of Westwood Manor, Bradford-on-Avon, and Laura, daughter of Mr and Mrs Martin Hattrell of Crescent Grove, London.

MR T. J. W. KNOX AND MS E. C. HAMMOND HUNT
The engagement is announced between Tom, son of Mr James Knox and Mrs Deirdre Knox, and Ellie, daughter of Mr Ian Hammond and Ms Judith Hunt.

Marriages

MR K. W. STEWART AND MS A. F. H. HILL
The marriage took place on 26th August 2023, at Hyannisport, Massachusetts, USA, between Kenneth Stewart and Annie Hill.

Deaths

BESLEE Penelope Gaye (Penny) died on 22nd August 2023. Much-loved mother to Lisa and James and beloved grandmother to Alicia, Esme, Oliver and Scarlett. A great friend to many. Private family funeral. Donations, if desired, to www.justgiving.com/team/PenelopeBeslee

BIBOW Frances Adele (née Lowe) passed away peacefully at home on 31st August 2023. Much-loved wife of the late Rolf, dearly beloved mother to Elaine, John (deceased), Robert and Catherine. Grandmother to Amelia, Joel, Wilhelmina, Rupert and Persephone. Great-grandmother to Reilly and Evelyn. Private cremation with memorial in Farmington, Connecticut, USA, to follow. Donations, if desired, to Autoimmune and Multiple Sclerosis Society. www.aimscharity.org

HUTCHINSON Cannon William David passed away peacefully on 18th August 2023, aged 95. A celebration of his life will be held at St Mary the Virgin Anglican Church, Woodbridge, Suffolk, at 2pm on 14th October.

LUXON Professor Linda Maitland CBE died on 2nd September 2023, aged 75. Beloved mother to Rupert, Cordelia, Clementine and Christianna, adored grandmother to seven, and greatly missed by all family and friends. Funeral service to be held at Holy Trinity Church, Cookham, on 14th September at 11am. Inquiries to Arnold's, Marlow. Tel: 01628 898866.

NELIGAN Christine (née Ashcroft) died at home on 28th August 2023 with Paddy and her family around her. Funeral Wednesday 20th September from 12.30pm at Rufforth Parish Hall, YO23 3FZ, and natural burial ground. No black, no flowers (any donation in lieu to Macmillan nurses). Contact funeral director Faye Quin, 01904 643936.

ONSLOW Barbara Mary. Peacefully on 6th August 2023, aged 86. A much-respected scholarly researcher of Victorian periodicals, notably on 19th-century women journalists. Beloved wife of Richard and mother of Harriet. She will be greatly missed by family and friends. Donations if desired to www.fawcettsociety.org.uk.

RALPH Elisabeth passed away peacefully at her home, aged 81. Elisabeth will be greatly missed by all her family. A service will be held at Reading Crematorium on Wednesday 20th September at 12.15pm. Family flowers. Donations if desired will be given to Sue Ryder c/o Tomalin & Son 38 Reading Road, Henley-on-Thames RG9 1AG.

REID James RC (Edinburgh). Peacefully at home on Thursday August 31st, 2023, with his family by his side. Jim, much-loved husband to Marian. Loving father to Laura and Adam and grandfather to Angus and Finlay. Jim will be sadly missed by all his family and friends. Funeral service will be held at Mortonhall Crematorium, Main Chapel on Thursday 14th September at 11am to which all are welcome.

RUSHMERE Dudley Leslie Arthur on 1st September 2023, aged 81, peacefully at home. Beloved husband of Sarah, dearest father to Lynne, Lawrance and Tim, much-loved Grandpa Bean. Funeral private, no flowers. Donations: St Barnabas House, Worthing.

SNAPE Anita (Ann) (née Downes) on 11th August 2023, aged 81. Sorely missed by Peter, Sarah, Samantha, Rupert, Hugo, Hector and Tabitha. Donations to Rennie Grove via her tribute page at www.jbrownfuneralservices.co.uk.

WHISTON
Dr James ("Jim") KSG OBE CChem FRSC
On 15th August 2023. Beloved and devoted husband of the late Teresa, much-loved father of Clare Catherine and John Patrick, adored grandpa of Thomas and Tessa, and dear father-in-law of Natalie. A distinguished career with ICI, national and international chemical industries advocate, and various UK government appointments. In retirement, served the Catholic Church nationally in various key positions, and the diocese of Middlesbrough including financial secretary, trustee and chair of governors for local schools. Requiem Mass to be held at St Mary's RC Cathedral, Coulby Newham, on 12th September 2023 at noon prior to interment in Thornaby Cemetery. Will friends please meet at the cathedral. Inquiries to W Storey Funeral Service, 20 Redcar Road, Guisborough, North Yorkshire. Tel: 01287 632730.

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Weather

Today Dry and hot with hazy sunshine in most places, patchy fog near some coasts. Max 31C (88F), min 12C (54F)

Around Britain

Key: b=bright, c=cloud, d=drizzle, pc=partly cloudy du=dull, f=fair, fg=fog, h=hail, m=mist, r=rain, sh=showers, sl=sleet, sn=snow, s=sun, t=thunder *=previous day **=data not available

	Temp C midday yesterday		Rain mm 24 hrs to 5pm yesterday	Sun hr*
Aberdeen	25	S	0.0	0.0
Aberporth	26	PC	0.0	11.2
Anglesey	26	PC	0.4	11.8
Aviemore	25	S	0.2	8.5
Barnstaple	26	S	0.8	**
Bedford	28	S	0.0	**
Belfast	24	S	0.4	7.8
Birmingham	26	S	0.0	**
Bournemouth	28	S	0.0	9.4
Bridlington	22	S	0.0	**
Bristol	26	S	0.0	10.2
Camborne	23	PC	0.0	11.1
Cardiff	25	S	0.0	10.5
Edinburgh	20	S	0.0	10.0
Eskdalemuir	20	FG	0.8	9.5
Glasgow	22	S	0.0	8.0
Hereford	26	S	0.2	**
Herstmonceux	28	S	0.0	8.0
Ipswich	26	S	0.0	10.1
Isle of Man	23	PC	0.0	11.2
Isle of Wight	26	S	0.0	**
Jersey	**	**	0.0	8.2
Keswick	24	PC	0.0	**
Kinloss	27	S	0.0	9.7
Leeds	22	S	0.0	**
Lerwick	14	FG	0.6	0.1
Leuchars	19	S	0.2	3.8
Lincoln	26	S	0.0	6.4
Liverpool	23	S	0.0	**
London	29	S	0.0	9.9
Lyneham	26	S	0.0	9.0
Manchester	26	C	0.2	9.4
Margate	27	**	0.0	10.3
Milford Haven	25	PC	0.0	**
Newcastle	18	R	0.4	**
Nottingham	24	S	0.0	6.6
Orkney	19	S	0.0	4.2
Oxford	28	S	0.0	**
Plymouth	25	S	0.0	**
Portland	23	S	0.0	**
Scilly, St Mary's	20	S	0.0	**
Shoreham	28	S	0.0	10.1
Shrewsbury	24	S	0.0	9.7
Snowdonia	23	S	0.2	**
Southend	25	S	0.0	8.6
South Uist	22	S	1.2	**
Stornoway	19	S	0.4	6.3
Tiree	19	S	0.0	8.3
Whitehaven	22	S	0.0	10.7
Wick	19	S	0.0	**
Yeovilton	28	S	0.0	10.1

The world

All readings local midday yesterday

Alicante	27	PC	Madeira	28	PC
Amsterdam	24	PC	Madrid	28	S
Athens	26	B	Malaga	24	PC
Auckland	29	PC	Mallorca	15	R
Bahrain	26	PC	Malta	38	S
Bangkok	19	S	Melbourne	32	PC
Barbados	24	PC	Mexico City	31	PC
Barcelona	32	PC	Miami	25	PC
Beijing	27	S	Milan	32	S
Beirut	29	PC	Mombasa	30	S
Belgrade	29	PC	Montreal	28	S
Berlin	16	PC	Moscow	28	S
Bermuda	26	D	Mumbai	29	SH
Bordeaux	24	S	Munich	30	S
Brussels	26	B	Nairobi	28	S
Bucharest	31	S	Naples	28	S
Budapest	33	S	New Orleans	26	S
Buenos Aires	33	PC	New York	12	S
Cairo	28	S	Nice	40	S
Calcutta	31	PC	Nicosia	29	S
Canberra	18	B	Oslo	20	S
Cape Town	29	S	Paris	17	PC
Chicago	16	S	Perth	27	PC
Copenhagen	24	S	Prague	20	S
Corfu	11	D	Reykjavik	30	B
Delhi	18	PC	Riga	35	S
Dubai	23	C	Rio de Janeiro	42	S
Dublin	43	S	Riyadh	23	B
Faro	33	S	Rome	25	S
Florence	22	PC	San Francisco	31	S
Frankfurt	11	R	Santiago	27	S
Geneva	19	B	São Paulo	30	PC
Gibraltar	30	S	Seoul	24	S
Helsinki	29	PC	Seychelles	17	PC
Hong Kong	31	B	Singapore	29	PC
Honolulu	17	PC	St Petersburg	32	PC
Istanbul	18	PC	Stockholm	29	B
Jerusalem	22	S	Sydney	35	S
Johannesburg	35	S	Tel Aviv	22	S
Kuala Lumpur	29	S	Tenerife	31	PC
Kyiv	29	PC	Tokyo	**	**
Lanzarote	19	B	Vancouver	25	PC
Las Palmas	28	S	Venice	27	PC
Lima	27	S	Vienna	19	C
Lisbon	25	PC	Warsaw	26	PC
Los Angeles	36	PC	Washington	24	S
Luxor	25	S	Zurich	39	S

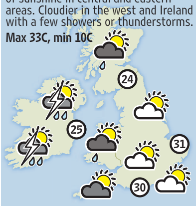
Five days ahead

Hot and dry in the southeast at first, but otherwise turning fresher and more unsettled

Tomorrow

A dry, sunny and hot day across much of Britain and Ireland with long spells of sunshine in central and eastern areas. Cloudier in the west and Ireland with a few showers or thunderstorms.

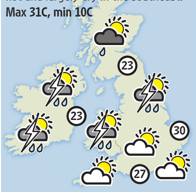
Max 33C, min 10C



Sunday

Turning more unsettled with showers and thunderstorms across central, northern and western areas. Staying hot and largely dry in the southeast.

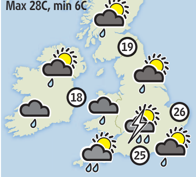
Max 31C, min 10C



Monday

Rather cloudy with showers or longer spells of rain in places. Warm and humid in central and southeastern areas with a few showers or thunderstorms.

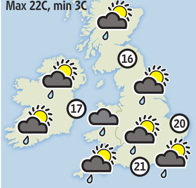
Max 28C, min 6C



Tuesday

Some places will stay dry with sunny spells, but showers will develop widely and perhaps a spell of rain in southern and central Britain and Ireland.

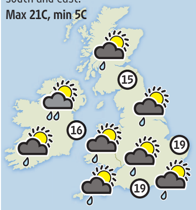
Max 22C, min 3C



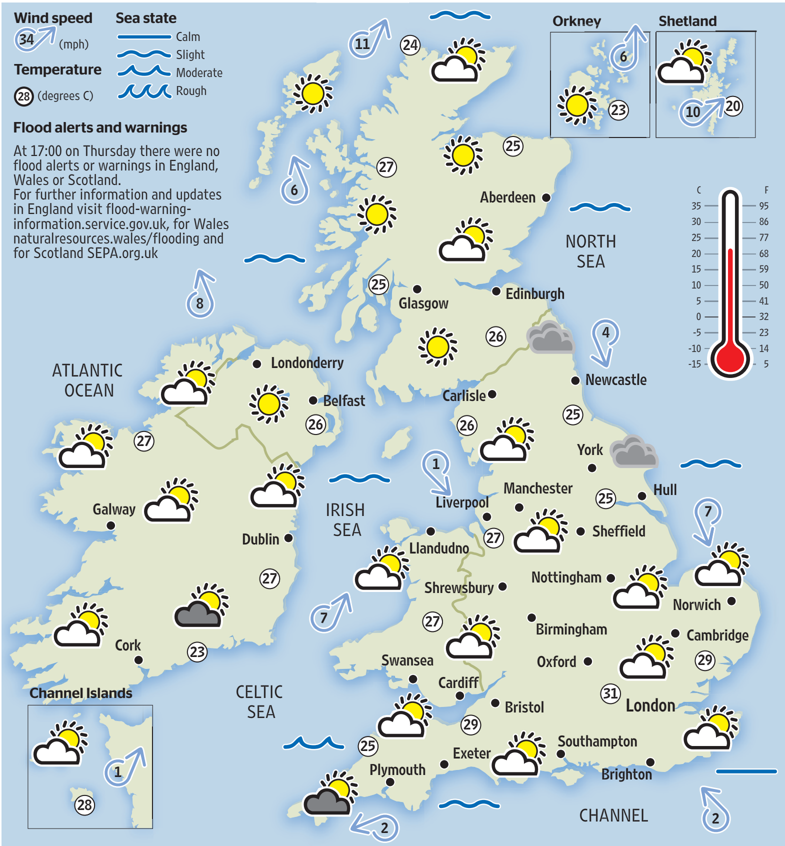
Wednesday

Rather cloudy with rain or showers, although brighter at times in the south and east.

Max 21C, min 5C



The Times weather page is provided by WeatherQuest



Flood alerts and warnings

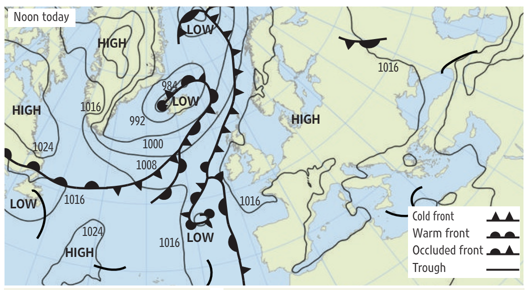
At 17:00 on Thursday there were no flood alerts or warnings in England, Wales or Scotland.
For further information and updates in England visit flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk, for Wales naturalresources.wales/flooding and for Scotland SEPA.org.uk

General situation: Sunny and hot in most areas with coastal fog patches. Thunderstorms in Cornwall by evening.
SW Scotland, IoM, Glasgow, Argyll, Cen Highland, Moray Firth: Staying dry and mostly sunny, turning hot into the afternoon. Light and variable winds. Maximum 29C (84F), minimum 14C (57F).
NW Scotland, NE Scotland, N Isles: Dry and very warm with sunny spells. Coastal fog patches by evening. Light to moderate south to southwesterly winds. Maximum 28C (82F), minimum 12C (54F).
SW Eng: Sunny spells and some coastal fog patches. Isolated thunderstorms by the evening and overnight. Light and variable winds. Maximum 28C (82F), minimum 15C (59F).
E Eng, NE Eng, Borders, Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Dundee: Staying dry with coastal fog patches. Sunny and turning very warm inland. Light and variable winds. Maximum 27C (81F), minimum 12C (54F).
Republic of Ireland, N Ireland: Dry and hot with sunny spells and patchy cloud. Fog may linger near some parts of the coast through the day. Light southerly winds. Maximum 30C (86F), minimum 13C (55F).
London, SE Eng, Cen S Eng, E Anglia, Midlands, Cen N Eng, Lake District, NW Eng, Channel Is, Wales: A hot, dry day with long spells of sunshine, hazy at times. Light and variable winds. Maximum 31C (88F), minimum 13C (55F).

Tides

Tidal predictions.
Heights in metres

Today		Ht		Ht
Aberdeen	08:44	3.4	21:21	3.3
Avonmouth	01:09	9.9	13:32	9.5
Belfast	06:01	2.9	18:35	3.0
Cardiff	01:00	9.1	13:22	8.8
Devonport	--:--	--	12:05	4.3
Dover	05:54	5.3	18:23	5.3
Dublin	--:--	--	--:--	--
Falmouth	11:52	4.0	--:--	--
Greenock	06:45	2.9	19:01	2.9
Harwich	06:14	3.2	18:47	3.3
Holyhead	05:26	4.4	18:10	4.3
Hull	--:--	--	13:20	5.8
Leith	09:55	4.4	22:26	4.3
Liverpool	05:54	7.2	18:35	7.1
London Bridge	08:22	5.7	20:55	5.9
Lowestoft	04:32	2.2	17:23	2.2
Milford Haven	--:--	--	13:12	5.1
Morecambe	06:08	7.1	18:49	6.9
Newhaven	05:46	5.1	18:19	5.0
Newquay	--:--	--	12:10	5.2
Oban	--:--	--	12:46	2.7
Penzance	11:46	4.2	--:--	--
Portsmouth	06:32	3.8	18:56	3.8
Shoreham	05:54	4.8	18:23	4.7
Southampton	05:14	3.5	07:59	3.5
Swansea	--:--	--	13:01	6.9
Tees	10:55	4.4	23:31	4.3
Weymouth	--:--	--	12:41	1.4



Synoptic situation

A large area of high pressure over Europe will provide dry, settled and hot conditions across Britain and Ireland. Light winds and humid air will generate some coastal mist and fog in places. Isolated thunderstorms may develop over Ireland in the afternoon. Fronts in the Atlantic will lead to the chance of rain in western Ireland overnight.

Highs and lows

24hrs to 5pm yesterday

Warmest: Heathrow, 32.0C
Coldest: Altnaharra, Sutherland, 8.6C
Wettest: Portglenone, Co Antrim, 4.8mm
Sunniest: Manston, 8.0hrs*

Sun and moon

For Greenwich
Sun rises: 06.23
Sun sets: 19.31
Moon rises: 23.43
Moon sets: 17.48 Sat
New Moon: September 15th

Hours of darkness

Aberdeen	20:17-05:56
Belfast	20:29-06:15
Birmingham	20:10-06:01
Cardiff	20:14-06:07
Exeter	20:15-06:10
Glasgow	20:24-06:06
Liverpool	20:16-06:05
London	20:02-05:55
Manchester	20:13-06:01
Newcastle	20:12-05:57
Norwich	19:58-05:48
Penzance	20:22-06:18
Sheffield	20:10-05:58

Weather Eye
Paul Simons



The heatwave gripping the UK is both stifling hot and also humid, making life especially uncomfortable. It is not only hot sticky days that are stressful, because much of the country is also experiencing tropical nights, with temperatures remaining at 20C or more overnight in the muggy conditions, making it difficult to sleep and putting the body under even more stress.

The human body's first line of defence against excessive heat is to sweat. As the sweat evaporates from the skin it loses heat and helps cool the body, but when the weather is hot and humid it is much more difficult to sweat because the air already has high levels of moisture. The sweat starts dripping off, soaking clothes and making for a soggy, uncomfortable experience.

A healthy adult can eventually acclimatise to the heat by making more plasma, the watery content of blood that allows the blood system to move heat to the skin more effectively to cool off by sweating. The body can also adapt by starting to sweat earlier and increasing the maximum rate of sweating.

Older people are less able to adjust, as the cardiovascular system changes with age and pumps blood less effectively, moving less heat to the skin and making it even more difficult to sweat. Both older people and children may have less active sweat responses, which can reduce their ability to cool off through sweating. Not only can older people be less tolerant of heat, they are also more likely to have underlying health conditions such as heart disease and respiratory problems. Certain medications can put them at even greater risk of harm and over-65s make up the majority of casualties in heatwaves.

Eventually, as temperatures rise the body overheats, the heart has to work harder to pump blood flow to the skin to get rid of the heat and sweating depletes body fluids. Prolonged heat can result in life-threatening heatstroke, which needs immediate and rapid cooling and medical treatment.

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Sport

'Notes made me look like serial killer'

Josh Kerr's obsession with details delivered world title – now he is targeting Olympic gold, **Rick Broadbent** writes

IAN RUTHERFORD FOR THE TIMES



Kerr gives the young athletes at Edinburgh AC a look at the gold medal he won in Budapest, below

Not long after the pulsating drama of Josh Kerr's victory in the 1,500m at the World Athletics Championships, a photograph started doing the rounds. It showed two kids in Edinburgh Athletics Club vests posing with post-race grins. It would have seemed beyond the clichés of the most parochial scriptwriter to predict these tyros would become track titans and give us a kind of Seb Coe vs Steve Ovett 2.0.

Last summer Jake Wightman roared past the Norwegian phenomenon Jakob Ingebrigtsen with 200 metres to go to win Britain's first 1,500m world title since Steve Cram in 1983. Fast forward 12 months and the injured Wightman watched from a TV gantry in Budapest as Kerr did the same.

That surge down the final straight fuelled the urge to repackage the past for the modern day but Britain really is in a new era of middle-distance Midas men. This time, though, the duel will be marked by the ties that bind rather than a clash of contrasts.

Nine days on from his greatest race, Kerr says that he started thinking about the Olympics in Paris "eight days ago". He has since spent time with his father John, sightseeing in Zurich, but admits: "It's difficult at this point in my career to smell the roses."



The Olympic bronze medallist behind Ingebrigtsen in 2021, the Scot sounds Kipling-esque as he talks about dealing with coming fifth to Wightman in last year's World Championships final. It had been a difficult year but surely there was a sting in seeing Wightman a second ahead?

"Jake had worked for that moment for a very long time and it was not my responsibility to become selfish," Kerr says. "As soon as I crossed the line, my job was to make sure he enjoyed and remembered that moment as the best in his life for the rest of his life.

"My main thought was to celebrate a man who had just run the race of his career. That was the only emotion I felt. He's an amazing man and it wasn't about me — at that point."

It is now. Kerr, at 25, is four years Wightman's junior. He is thoughtful, analytical and clearly has a moral code that extends to a vocal stance against the sport's dopers. It was why he joined the Seattle-based Brooks Beasts Track Club in 2018. "It was quite difficult to find a group that does not have any positive [drug] tests or sanctions, and I did not want to sully myself with a group that had a past," he says.

His coach, Danny Mackey, was actually a whistleblower in the anti-doping case against the Nike Oregon Project and according to a 2015 police report, Nike's former global director of athletics, John Capriotti, once threatened to kill him. "He [Mackey] is the reason I signed with Brooks," Kerr says.

Back to Wightman, though, and the symbiotic rivalry. "Jake and I need each other to push each other on," he says. "I want to beat the best at their best and he's the same. From gun to tape it's going to absolute war regardless of our relationship off the track. That's 100 per cent the storyline here. We will battle to beat each other. I have a lot of respect for him and for the way he has treated me in my big moments and I know his sacrifices. And we are both doing it right because the clean way is the only way for us — and that's a very hard road to walk."

Kerr's innate steel was forged in Edinburgh by his father, a former professional rugby player, and mother Jill, a physio. "I just wanted to be the best in the world at something," Kerr says. He wanted it to be in rugby — his brother Jake has played for Scotland — but by the age of eight he was shedding other sports. He went to university in the United States at 17 and lives a nomadic life, with a house in New Mexico, a fiancée in Florida and family in Edinburgh.

His desire to leave no stone unturned leads to writing copious notes on his rivals' tactics, split times and strengths. "It's a massive part of being able to be great on one day," he says. "It's like goalkeepers doing analysis on penalty kicks, and means I'm never surprised. In my Budapest hotel, I had loads of notes lying around my room. The cleaner must have thought I was a serial killer with all these names written down and all sorts of info next to each one."

He then gives a revealing insight into Ingebrigtsen's showboating during the semi-final. The Norwegian whipped up the crowd with some gestures down the home straight, but Kerr crossed the line behind him with a broad smile.

"When he does something like that it's an emotional thing and there are reasons," he says. "I thought it showed he was relieved about something — maybe he'd not been feeling great in the warm-up, maybe he had scared himself in the race. If he's firing on all cylinders it's going to be tough and I needed a little edge, a 1 per cent here, and that was it.

"I thought, if he is having to act the fool to big up his own confidence, there's a reason that I'm going to exploit. He likes to slow it down with 200m to go and then kick, so I thought, 'I'm going to make him run faster than he wants to.' Of course, saying it is one thing."

After being beaten, Ingebrigtsen groused that he had been ill, although he recovered sufficiently to win the 5,000m gold. Did Kerr feel slighted? "He's a fierce competitor who does not always have the respect he should have for his competitors. That's OK. People love it or hate it, but it means nothing to me that he's not going to come and congratulate me. I'll always give credit and I'm not scared of losing, but that's not his game."

Kerr knows these moments do not come around often, but he also found reflecting in the whirlwind of becoming an Olympic medallist did not help him last year and the 1,500m heats in Paris, on August 2, are looming.

There is another date on the horizon too. He is getting married to Larimar Rodriguez, a newly qualified doctor, next October. She became something of a Twitter star herself in Hungary as part of a group of fans succumbing to wild celebrations in the stadium. Any watcher was dragged on to that emotional waltzer, including Kerr. "Everyone in that group, apart from my fiancée, works for Brooks," he says. "And they all had a hand in what I'm doing. That passion shows that I am not just a number there." He is also their first track world champion.

It will probably be the case that, as with Coe vs Ovett, Kerr vs Wightman is a race run sparingly. Kerr often races at other distances, such as the half-marathon and 5,000m, and then drops down to 800m to work on speed. He says he will stay at 1,500m until the Los Angeles Olympics in 2028 and then may hit the roads.

After last Thursday's race in Zurich, when he was pipped on the line after paying the price for pursuing Mo Farah's British record, he spent the day with his dad. "Together we set out this plan to be big high-achievers and did not want to settle for anything less," he says. It is far from journey's end, though. "The jump from being world-class to being world champion is the hardest to take and I feel I have a responsibility to continue this success for Britain."

He spent Tuesday night unwinding and rewinding, returning to Edinburgh AC where more pictures were taken and fresh dreams watered. In that fading old picture, both Kerr and Wightman were winners as part of a cross-country relay. Only one can win now. It will be a thrill to watch.

Lowry: No place like home

Golf

Shane Lowry has set his sights on a second Horizon Irish Open title backed by busloads of home fans after making a strong start to a massive month.

Lowry carded seven birdies and three bogeys in an opening four-under-par 68 to trail the clubhouse leader Shubhankar Sharma by three shots on a sweltering opening day at The K Club.

The former Open champion, who was still an amateur when he won the Irish Open in 2009, will defend his BMW PGA Championship title next week and then make his second appearance in the Ryder Cup at the end of September, with Europe seeking to regain the trophy in Rome.

"Take away everything else that's in the next few weeks, this is a big week for me," Lowry said. "I want to go out there and play well and give myself a chance to win this tournament.

"It's only 45 minutes to an hour from where I'm from in Clara. I want the people to be getting on their buses on Sunday morning to come and watch me try and win this tournament. That's all I want this week."

Lowry's 68 was matched by his compatriot Mark Power in his first start as a professional, as well as the Ryder Cup captain Luke Donald, while Rory McIlroy returned a 69. Sharma's flawless 65 gave the Indian a one-shot lead over Jordan Smith, Ross Fisher and the Ryder Cup vice-captain Thomas Bjorn.

Molano denies Groves victory

Cycling

Colombia's Juan Sebastián Molano sprinted to victory on the 12th stage of La Vuelta yesterday, from Ólvega to Zaragoza, as Australia's Kaden Groves missed the chance of a third win.

On the last day before the race heads back into the mountains, Molano, of UAE Team Emirates, was delivered by his team into the final sprint and powered across the line. Groves, of Alpecin-Deceuninck, was favourite for the flat 151km stage but later indicated he had suffered a mechanical problem.

Sepp Kuss, the American rider, still leads overall by 26sec from Marc Soler.

Row over TV 'crown jewels'

Martyn Ziegler Chief Sports Reporter

Commercial broadcasters are demanding that they are given the same access as the BBC and ITV to show "listed events" such as the Rugby World Cup final, football's World Cups and the Wimbledon finals.

The Media Bill, which is going through parliament, would further restrict the broadcast of the so-called "crown jewels" of sport to public service broadcasters, such as the BBC, ITV and Channel 4. Other listed events include Uefa's European Championship, the Grand National and the FA Cup final.

The current rules mean listed events can be shown only on broadcast services that are received by 95 per cent of the UK population and which are free-to-air. The bill would go further and amend "qualifying conditions" so that only a service provided by a public service broadcaster can air such an event, ruling out YouTube channels, for example. Coba (Commercial Broadcasters and On-Demand Services Association) argues, however, that listed events should be available to any broadcasting service that makes them free-to-view.

"Our view is that [the bill] will unfairly prevent commercial services . . . from showing listed events," Adam Minns, Coba's executive director, said. "The knock-on effect will be to make BBC licence-fee payers foot the bill for these events even if commercial players are willing to show them for free."

Top two look destined for another epic



Stuart Fraser
Tennis Correspondent, New York

There is no one better qualified than Alexander Zverev to offer an opinion on the form of Carlos Alcaraz and Novak Djokovic. Over the past three weeks on hard courts in the United States, the world No12 from Germany has suffered straight-sets defeats at the hands of both players.

"I played Novak in Cincinnati [in the semi-finals] and I played Carlos here [at the US Open in the quarter-finals]," Zverev, 26, said. "I think they are at a level of their own at the moment. The other guys have got to catch up. It's as simple as that."

It has felt somewhat inevitable ever since the epic final between Alcaraz and Djokovic in Cincinnati — the Serbian won a deciding third-set tie-break after close to four hours of play — that this would end up being the championship match in New York.

You would struggle yesterday to find any of the various pundits at Flushing Meadows who believe that either of the world's top two players will not claim the semi-final victory today that will set up a scintillating finale on Sunday. "It would be great to play a final against Novak here in New York, but both of us have a really tough semi-final, so let's see," Alcaraz said. "But obviously both of us are looking for that final."



Alcaraz has only dropped one set in the tournament

The opinion of most bookmakers that Djokovic remains the slight tournament favourite is shared by most experts in attendance here. The 36-year-old has had one of his least challenging routes through a grand-slam draw, facing no opponent ranked higher than the world No9 Taylor Fritz. Only the world No47 Ben Shelton stands in the way of a 36th appearance in a major final.

Alcaraz has only dropped one set in five matches but there have been brief moments in which he has looked a little uncomfortable — Zverev will rue the two break points he failed to take at 3-3 in the first set on Wednesday night. Admittedly, the 20-year-old Spaniard's level was so high during the grass-court season that it has raised our expectations when he takes to the court.

There is no doubt, though, that Alcaraz faces the tougher of the two semi-finals. His opponent Daniil Medvedev, seeded No3, won the title here in 2021 and often plays his best tennis in New York. He also has a win over Alcaraz on his record, in the second round of Wimbledon 2021, although he lost their next two matches in straight sets.

"It needs to be 11 out of ten because that's how Carlos is," Medvedev said. "He is very strong. Even here he lost one set but I watched some matches and sometimes on break points he runs for the passing shots. It is incredible stuff. The last two times I lost, let's call it pretty easy. I'm someone who fights a lot, so I want to try to be better."

Alcaraz is also trying to reverse a trend of recent history. Since Roger Federer won the last of five consecutive titles here in 2008, no male US Open champion has successfully defended his title. The theory is that the last of the four grand-slam tournaments to be held annually is a little more unpredictable because of tired legs towards the end of the season. In the same period in the women's event, only Kim Clijsters and Serena Williams retained their titles.

"I think I'm more mature now," Alcaraz said. "I grew up a lot since last year. Last year I was facing my first semi-final of a grand-slam event. Now I'm facing my fourth one. I deal better with the pressure in those kind of moments. I am a different person and a different player."

Against the last remaining male home hope, Shelton, Djokovic is contesting a men's record 47th grand-slam semi-final. He is now one ahead of Federer so should have no issue handling the partisan New York crowd given his vast experience of similar situations through the years. He has never previously gone up against the booming Shelton serve of up to 149mph but will be able to neutralise this weapon as one of the best returners in the sport. Not that Djokovic himself is taking this match for granted.

"Shelton has a lot of charisma," Djokovic said. "He brings a lot of energy on the court. He is very quick, very powerful. He has been serving some bombs this tournament. When his serve is on, he's a very difficult player to play against, especially because he's a lefty as well. He thrives on the energy of the crowd on the centre court. It gets him going and he plays his best."

JAVIER GARCIA/SHUTTERSTOCK



Klugman had to quit her quarter-final in tears, inset, when she was 6-0, 3-0 down on another sweltering day in New York

Heat proves too much for Klugman

Stuart Fraser

Hannah Klugman's breakthrough run in the US Open junior tournament ended with her retirement on another day of extreme heat and humidity in New York.

Contesting her first grand-slam singles quarter-final, the unseeded 14-year-old Briton was 6-0, 3-0 down against Laura Samsonova, the No10 seed from the Czech Republic, when she quit in tears after 47 minutes.

In between the first and second sets she had taken an off-court medical timeout. Klugman particularly struggled after long baseline rallies, occasionally hunching over in discomfort. She also had strapping on her shoulder throughout the match.

Although the US Open's heat policy does allow for the suspension of junior matches, the wet-bulb globe temperature — a measure of the heat stress in direct sunlight — did not exceed the required threshold of 32.2C. A peak reading of 29.7C was recorded, although information boards around the grounds showed a reading of 34C based on a combination of the heat and humidity.

Klugman was able to walk off the court but she later withdrew from her scheduled doubles quarter-final with her compatriot Mimi Xu.

Britain's Joe Salisbury survived the conditions to reach his fifth grand-slam men's doubles final. The 31-year-old and his American partner Rajeev Ram defeated Ivan Dodig and Austin Krajicek 7-5, 3-6, 6-3 and will play Rohan Bopanna and Matthew Ebden on Arthur Ashe Stadium in a bid for a fourth major trophy together. Ram, 39, wilted during the third set but recovered after having a pack of sushi delivered to his courtside chair. "I couldn't eat as much as I wanted before the match because I was sweating buckets in the warm-up," Ram said.

Results

Football

European Championship qualifying: Group B

France (1) **2** **Ireland** (0) **0**
Tchouaméni 19
Thuram 48

Holland (3) **3** **Greece** (0) **0**
De Roon 17
Gakpo 31
Weghorst 39

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
France	5	5	0	0	11	0	11	**15**
Holland	3	2	0	1	6	4	2	**6**
Greece	4	2	0	2	5	5	0	**6**
Ireland	4	1	0	3	4	5	-1	**3**
Gibraltar	4	0	0	4	0	12	-12	**0**

Group E

Czech Rep (0) **1** **Albania** (0) **1**
Cerny 56 — Bajrami 66
18,641

Poland (0) **2** **Faroe Islands** (0) **0**
Lewandowski 73 (pen), 83

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
Czech Rep	4	2	2	0	7	2	5	**8**
Albania	4	2	1	1	6	3	3	**7**
Poland	4	2	0	2	6	6	0	**6**
Moldova	4	1	2	1	4	5	-1	**5**
Faroe Isl	4	0	1	3	2	9	-7	**1**

Group G

Lithuania (0) **2** **Montenegro** (0) **2**
Paulauskas 71 — Krstovic 78
Cernych 90+4 — Savic 89
11,328

Serbia (1) **1** **Hungary** (2) **2**
Szalai 10 (og) — Varga 34
Orban 36

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
Hungary	4	3	1	0	7	1	6	**10**
Serbia	4	2	1	1	6	3	3	**7**
Montenegro	4	1	2	1	3	4	-1	**5**
Lithuania	4	0	2	2	3	7	-4	**2**
Bulgaria	4	0	2	2	2	6	-4	**2**

Group H

Denmark (3) **4** **San Marino** (0) **0**
Hojbjerg 26
Maehle 28, Wind 40
Di Maio 90+3 (og)

Kazakhstan (0) **0** **Finland** (0) **1**
30,019 — Antman 78

Slovenia (3) **4** **N Ireland** (1) **2**
Sporar 3, 56 — Price 7
Stojanovic 17 — Evans 53
Sesko 42 — 12,587

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
Finland	5	4	0	1	11	3	8	**12**
Denmark	5	3	1	1	11	5	6	**10**
Slovenia	5	3	1	1	9	6	3	**10**
Kazakhstan	5	3	0	2	8	5	3	**9**
N Ireland	5	1	0	4	4	7	-3	**3**
San Marino	5	0	0	5	0	17	-17	**0**

International match

Wales (0) **0** **South Korea** (0) **0**

(at Cardiff City Stadium)

Other results Austria 1 Moldova 1; Bulgaria 0 Iran 1; Norway 6 Jordan 0; Qatar 1 Kenya 2.

European Under-21 Championship qualifying: Group six Northern Ireland 0 Luxembourg 1.

Cricket

First one-day international
South Africa v Australia

Bloemfontein (Australia won toss): Australia beat South Africa by three wickets

South Africa		(balls)
†Q de Kock c Green b Stoinis	11	(31)
*T Bavuma not out	114	(142)
H E van der Dussen run out	8	(16)
A K Markram c Carey b Green	19	(14)
H Klaasen b Stoinis	14	(19)
D A Miller c Carey b Hazlewood	0	(2)
M Jansen b Hazlewood	32	(40)
G W Coetzee c Hazlewood b Agar	2	(8)
K A Maharaj b Abbott	2	(6)
K S Rabada c Carey b Zampa	1	(7)
L T Ngidi c Carey b Hazlewood	0	(10)
Extras (b 4, lb 3, w 11, nb 1)	19	
Total (49 overs)	**222**	

Fall of wickets 1-19, 2-33, 3-70, 4-97, 5-100, 6-157, 7-168, 8-182, 9-185.

Bowling Hazlewood 10-2-41-3; Stoinis 6-0-20-2; Abbott 9-0-40-1; Agar 9-0-40-1; Zampa 10-1-42-1; Green 5-0-32-1.

Australia		(balls)
D A Warner b Jansen	0	(2)
T M Head c Rabada b Ngidi	33	(28)
*M R Marsh c De Kock b Rabada	17	(15)
C D Green retired hurt	0	(2)
J P Inglis b Rabada	1	(5)
†A T Carey b Coetzee	3	(9)
M P Stoinis c Klaasen b Coetzee	17	(10)
M Labuschagne not out	80	(93)
S A Abbott b Maharaj	9	(11)
A C Agar not out	48	(69)
Extras (w 15, nb 2)	17	
Total (7 wkts, 40.2 overs)	**225**	

J R Hazlewood and A Zampa did not bat.

Fall of wickets 1-1, 2-38, 3-56, 4-56, 5-72, 6-93, 7-113.

Bowling Jansen 6-0-44-1; Rabada 9-1-48-2; Ngidi 8-0-42-1; Coetzee 7-0-44-2; Maharaj 9-0-38-1; Markram 1.2-0-9-0.

● Australia lead five-match series 1-0

Women's T20 World Cup qualifier

Almeria Netherlands 134-7 (S L Kalis 68); Scotland 99 (19 overs). ***Netherlands (2pts) won by 35 runs***.

Cycling

Tour of Britain

Leading positions: Fifth stage (Felixstowe, 192.4km): 1, W van Aert (Bel, Jumbo-Visma) 4hr 20min 5sec; 2, E Vernon (GB) at 3sec; 3, D van Poppel (Neth, BORA-hansgrohe); 4, A Salby (Den, Bingoal WB); 5, M Kanter (Ger, Movistar); 6, D Persico (It, Bingoal WB) all same time. **Overall** 1, Van Aert 17:45:36; 2, Vernon at 3sec; 3, Kanter; 4, O Kooij (Neth, Jumbo-Visma); 5, D Bomboi (Bel, TdT-Unibet); 6, Van Poppel all same time.

Vuelta a España

Leading positions: 12th stage (Ólvega to Zaragoza, 151km): 1, S Molano (Col, UAE Team Emirates) 3hr 23min 35sec; 2, K Groves (Aus, Alpecin-Deceuninck); 3, B van Poppel (Neth, Intermarché–Circus–Wanty); 4, R Oliveira (Por, UAE Team Emirates); 5, E Theuns (Bel, Lidl-Trek); 6, M van den Berg (Neth, EF Education-EasyPost. **Overall** 1, S Kuss (US, Jumbo-Visma) 42:51:20; 2, M Soler (Sp, UAE Team Emirates) at 26sec; 3, R Evenepoel (Bel, Soudal Quick-Step) 1min 9; 4, P Roglic (Slove, Jumbo-Visma) 1:32; 5, L Martinez (Fr, Groupama-FDJ) 2:02; 6, J Almeida (Por, UAE Team Emirates) 2:16.

Golf

DP World Tour Horizon Irish Open

Straffan, Kildare: Leading first-round scores (Great Britain and Ireland unless stated): **65** S Sharma (India). **66** J Smith, T Bjorn (Den), M Schneider (Ger), R Fisher, K Krogh Johannessen (Nor). **67** Wu Ashun (China), H Long (Ger), Z Lombard (SA), J Brun (Fr), J Luiten (Neth), M Lindberg (Swe). **68** G Wiebe (US), S Lowry, V Norrman (Swe), D Hillier (NZ), Y Paul (Ger), L Donald, M Power, M Pavon (Fr), S Soederberg (Swe), F Zanotti (Par), N von Dellingshausen (Ger), A Hidalgo (Sp), Wang Jeung-hun (S Kor), J Parry. **Selected: 69** R McIlroy.

Tennis

US Open

Flushing Meadows, New York (seeds in brackets; British players in blue): **Men: Singles: Quarter-final** (1) (12) C Alcaraz (Sp) bt A Zverev (Ger) 6-3, 6-2, 6-4. **Doubles: Semi-finals** (6) R Bopanna (India) and M Ebden (Aus) bt P-H Herbert (Fr) and N Mahut (Fr) 7-6 (7-3), 6-2; (3) R Ram (US) and **J Salisbury (GB)** bt (2) I Dodig (Cro) and A Krajicek (US) 7-5, 3-6, 6-3. **Women: Singles: Quarter-final** (17) M Keys (US) bt (9) M Vondrousova (Cz) 6-1, 6-4. **Doubles: Quarter-finals** (12) L Siegemund (Ger) and V Zvonareva (Russ) bt V Azarenka (Bela) and B Haddad Maia (Br) 5-7, 7-5, 6-4; (8) Hsieh Su-wei (Taiwan) and Wang Xinyu (China) bt (3) C Gauff (US) and J Pegula (US) 7-6 (7-3), 3-6, 6-4. **Mixed doubles: Semi-final** (1) J Pegula (US) and A Krajicek (US) bt T Townsend (US) and B Shelton (US) 6-7 (5-7), 6-1, 10-3.

Fixtures

Football

Kick-off 7.45 unless stated

European Championship qualifying: Group A Cyprus v Scotland; Georgia v Spain (5.0). **Group D** Croatia v Latvia; Turkey v Armenia. **Group J** Bosnia-Herzegovina v Liechtenstein; Luxembourg v Iceland; Slovakia v Portugal.

Under-21 international Wales v Liechtenstein (4.30, at Rodney Parade, Newport).

SPFL Trust Trophy Hibernian U21 v The New Saints (6.0).

Cricket

First one-day international: Sophia Gardens England v New Zealand (12.30).

Cycling

Tour of Britain sixth stage (Southend-on-Sea to Harlow).

Rugby league

Kick-off 8.0 unless stated

Betfred Super League Castleford v Hull; Huddersfield v Hull KR (7.45); St Helens v Leigh; Wakefield v Catalans Dragons (7.30).

Betfred Championship Newcastle v Featherstone; Sheffield v Keighley (7.30).

Rugby union

World Cup: Pool A France v New Zealand (8.15 at Stade de France).

Premiership Rugby Cup (7.30): Cornish Pirates v Bath; Doncaster v Cambridge.

Derby winner Hide dies

Edward Hide, who rode Morston to victory in the 1975 Derby at Epsom for trainer Arthur Budgett, has died. He was 86.

Hide had six victories in the five British classic races. He had his first ride in 1950, when only 13, and won 2,593 races in Britain between 1951 and 1983.

Trainer Mick Easterby, for whom Hide won the 1,000 Guineas in 1977 on Mrs McArdy, paid tribute yesterday, saying: "He was a genius. Eddie had it all. He was an intelligent man and he knew the formbook inside out."

Ascot

Rob Wright

1.50 Western
2.25 Olympic Candle
3.00 Seaward
3.35 Alazwar
4.10 Out Of Shadows
4.45 Aerion Power
5.20 Pastiche

Going: good
Draw: no advantage — **Sky Sports Racing**

1.50 Novice Stakes (2-Y-O: £8,100: 6f) (12 runners)

1 (3) 526 **CAJETAN** 18 (BF) Jack Channon 9-7 — **C Bishop**
2 (6) **NEMOV** C Cox 9-7 — **R L Moore**
3 (7) 445 **ODONNELL'S ORCHARD** 29 T Dascombe 9-7 — **L Keniry**
4 (8) 5 **WESTERN** 118 R Hannon 9-7 — **P Dobbs**
5 (5) **CALL TIME** J S Moore 9-5 — **S M Levey**
6 (4) 62 **GIVE IT UP** 13 R Spencer 9-5 — **J Crowley**
7 (1) 0 **HAVANA SMOKE** 42 Dylan Cunha 9-5 — **Greg Cheyne**
8 (11) **SEAX** G Scott 9-3 — **C Shepherd**
9 (10) 023 **MISS INFORMATION** 13 A Balding 9-2 — **O Murphy**
10 (9) 0 **RAVENSBOURNE** 29 E Walker 9-2 — **S Osborne**
11 (2) **JUSSONEMOR** A West 9-1 — **M Ghiani**
12 (12) 0 **OUR PAPA SMURF** 19 G L Moore 9-1 — **R Clutterbuck**

100-30 Nemov, 4-1 Western, 5-1 Odonnell's Orchard, 11-2 Cajetan, 6-1 Miss Information, 13-2 Give It Up, 16-1 Seax, 20-1 Ravensbourne.

Rob Wright's choice: Western showed ability on his debut here; this trip will suit **Dangers:** Cajetan, Odonnell's Orchard

2.25 Maiden Stakes (2-Y-O: £10,800: 7f) (11)

1 (11) **ACCUMULATE** R Varian 9-7 — **David Egan**
2 (2) 0 **DIMSONS** 14 R Hannon 9-7 — **S M Levey**
3 (1) **KESTREL** A P O'Brien (Ire) 9-7 — **R L Moore**
4 (9) **MONKEY ISLAND** B Meehan 9-7 — **P Dobbs**
5 (5) 3 **MOYASSR** 23 (BF) Owen Burrows 9-7 — **J Crowley**
6 (3) 3 **OLYMPIC CANDLE** 20 S bin Suroor 9-7 — **O Murphy**
7 (8) **PUREFOY** A Balding 9-7 — **H Turner**
8 (6) 4 **TEN BOB TONY** 23 (BF) E Walker 9-7 — **S Osborne**
9 (10) 02 **THE ICE PHOENIX** 16 C Hills 9-7 — **K Stott**
10 (7) 34 **WOOTTON'S JEWEL** 28 M Bell 9-7 — **J P Spencer**
11 (4) 0 **YARBOROUGH** 23 G L Moore 9-7 — **T P Queally**

7-2 Kestrel, 11-2 The Ice Phoenix, Olympic Candle, 13-2 Accumulate, 15-2 Dimsons, 8-1 Wootton's Jewel, 10-1 Ten Bob Tony, Moyassr, Purefoy.

Wright choice: Olympic Candle was not given a hard time when third at Newbury **Dangers:** Moysassr, Accumulate

3.00 Novice Stakes (2-Y-O: £16,200: 1m) (5)

1 (2) **CATCH THE LIGHT** A Balding 9-2 — **O Murphy**
2 (5) **CAVRIANA** B Meehan 9-2 — **S M Levey**
3 (1) **CLIMATE ACTION** M Bell 9-2 — **R L Moore**
4 (4) **PINK TICKET** E Walker 9-2 — **S Osborne**
5 (3) 4 **SEAWARD** 34 R Beckett 9-2 — **H Crouch**

11-8 Seaward, 2-1 Catch The Light, 4-1 Climate Action, 12-1 Cavriana, Pink Ticket.

Wright choice: Seaward steps up in distance after a fair fourth on her debut at Newmarket **Danger:** Climate Action

3.35 Handicap (£8,140: 1m) (12)

1 (6) 51010 **CRYSTAL CASQUE** 19 (D) B Millman 8-10-11 — **Mrs J Buck**
2 (3) 64022 **SHALADAR** 27 (P,D) K Ryan 4-10-11 — **Miss O Nicholls**
3 (1) 13002 **MAYSONG** 11 (P,D) Alice Haynes 6-10-10 — **Miss F O'Brien**
4 (12) 00005 **CARNIVAL ZAIN** 28 (T,C,D) M Hammond 6-10-10 — **Miss B Smith**
5 (2) 11312 **ONE STEP BEYOND** 13 (CD) G L Moore 6-10-9 — **Miss M Wright**
6 (8) 130-0 **MAPLEWOOD** 37 (P,D) I Williams 4-10-9 — **Miss A Stevens**
7 (10) 23-33 **FLYAWAYDREAM** 32 (BF) Sir M Prescott 4-10-7 — **Miss P Scott**
8 (9) 01000 **DOUBLE TIME** 23 (H,D) Sir M Todd 5-10-6 — **Miss M Jordan**
9 (11) 04434 **ALAZWAR** 29 (D) A Watson 5-10-4 — **Miss B Hampson**
10 (5) 63053 **GLOBAL ESTEEM** 13 (CD) J Gallagher 6-10-3 — **Miss S Brotherton**
11 (7) 01311 **LENNY'S SPIRIT** 28 (T,D) E Dunlop 5-10-2 — **Miss S Smith**
12 (4) 43313 **IDEAL GUEST** 9 (P,C) G Margarson 4-9-10 — **Miss R Margarson**

100-30 Maysong, 11-2 Flyawaydream, 6-1 Lenny's Spirit, 13-2 Shaladar, 7-1 One Step Beyond, 8-1 Alazwar, 12-1 Ideal Guest, Global Esteem.

Wright choice: Alazwar is back to his best trip after trying further on his past two runs **Dangers:** Ideal Guest, Flyawaydream

4.10 Classified Stakes (£10,800: 7f) (8)

1 (8) 2-650 **LYNDON B** 56 (P,D) J Flint 7-9-9 — **J P Spencer**
2 (5) 4-050 **CARAGIO** 56 (P,D) R Teal 3-9-5 — **T P Queally**
3 (3) 1-405 **GLENFINNAN** 14 A Balding 3-9-5 — **O Murphy**
4 (6) 21626 **KIARAAD** 13 (D) I Mohammed 3-9-5 — **S M Levey**
5 (7) -1301 **OUT OF SHADOWS** 34 (D) M Botti 3-9-5 — **B Sayette**
6 (2) 31055 **SAXON KING** 13 C Hills 3-9-5 — **R L Moore**
7 (4) 6-126 **SEA OF THIEVES** 41 (D) E Walker 3-9-5 — **S Osborne**
8 (1) 34144 **TAFREEJ** 14 (BF) W Haggas 3-9-5 — **J Crowley**

11-4 Tafreej, 7-2 Sea Of Thieves, 5-1 Saxon King, 11-2 Out Of Shadows, 7-1 Glenfinnan, 10-1 Kiaraad, 12-1 Lyndon B, 16-1 Caragio.

Wright choice: Out Of Shadows won in good style at Newcastle; he is unexposed **Dangers:** Saxon King, Kiaraad

4.45 Handicap (£23,193: 1m) (7)

1 (6) 50162 **MAJOR PARTNERSHIP** 41 (T,D) S bin Suroor 8-10-0 — **O Murphy**
2 (2) 0-434 **AERION POWER** 79 (D) Sir M Stoute 5-9-7 — **R L Moore**
3 (4) 66203 **OUZO** 12 (D) J Osborne 7-9-6 — **S Osborne**
4 (5) 00030 **ALREHB** 19 (D) K P De Foy 6-9-1 — **B Sayette**
5 (7) 06102 **BLUELIGHT BAY** 19 (D) E J-Houghton 3-9-0 — **C Bishop**
6 (1) 431-6 **DAYSOFOURLIVES** 27 (P,D) M Botti 3-8-6 — **S Cherchi**
7 (3) 42333 **MAN OF EDEN** 22 (B,D) H & R Charlton 3-8-5 — **David Egan**

11-4 Aerion Power, 3-1 Man Of Eden, Major Partnership, 11-2 Ouzo, 8-1 Bluelight Bay, 14-1 Daysofourlives, 16-1 Alrehb.

Wright choice: Aerion Power was fourth in the Hunt Cup at Royal Ascot **Dangers:** Major Partnership, Bluelight Bay

5.20 Handicap (3-Y-O: £8,715: 7f) (12)

1 (3) 1-214 **PASTICHE** 42 (D) G Boughey 9-11 — **R L Moore**
2 (5) 21212 **KIMNKATE** 13 (B,D) R Hughes 9-9 — **C Planas (3)**
3 (11) 33202 **GULMARG** 23 (P,D) S P C Woods 9-8 — **David Egan**
4 (4) 56322 **METAHORSE** 23 (P,D) Darryll Holland 9-8 — **K Stott**
5 (10) 14366 **HAVANA PUSEY** 13 J Gallagher 9-7 — **J P Spencer**
6 (7) 331- **VERMILION** 349 (H,D) A Balding 9-7 — **H Turner**
7 (1) 11560 **HARRY MAGNUS** 23 (H,T,BF,D) C Hills 9-6 — **J Crowley**
8 (9) 2-140 **ZOUZANNA** 38 H & R Charlton 9-5 — **O Murphy**
9 (8) 03003 **BOY BROWNING** 21 (P) E J-Houghton 9-0 — **H Crouch**
10 (2) 0-25 **LIBERTY** 24 J Chapple-Hyam 9-0 — **M Ghiani**
11 (12) 06410 **STARLIGHT NATION** 73 (D) C Cox 8-12 — **C Shepherd**
12 (6) 60344 **DE BRUYNE** 21 (BF) E Walker 8-9 — **S Osborne**

4-1 Kimnkate, 11-2 Pastiche, 7-1 Vermilion, 15-2 Gulmarg, De Bruyne, Metahorse, 10-1 Harry Magnus, 12-1 Starlight Nation, Liberty.

Wright choice: Pastiche raced too keenly early on over a mile at Newmarket **Dangers:** Havana Pusey, De Bruyne

Haydock Park

Rob Wright

1.30 Dubai Crystal
2.00 Raqiya
2.35 Soul Seeker
3.10 Dazzling Jewel
3.45 Prairie Falcon
4.20 Red Maids
4.55 Marmara Sea

Going: good
Draw: 7f-1m, low numbers best — **Racing TV**

1.30 Handicap (£8,688: 1m 4f) (7)

1 (5) 00304 **MOLINARI** 20 (D) M Todhunter 6-9-11 — **D Nolan**
2 (4) 61224 **DUBAI CRYSTAL** 70 K R Burke 3-9-9 — **S Feilden (7)**
3 (1) 21110 **GOLDEN MAVERICK** 27 I Williams 3-9-8 — **W Buick**
4 (7) 410 **FIFTH HARMONIC** 30 James Horton 3-9-7 — **P J McDonald**
5 (2) 54123 **FEUD** 20 (BF,CD) R Beckett 3-9-7 — **R Hornby**
6 (6) 234 **SHADOW DANCE** 88 (BF) R Varian 3-9-6 — **James Doyle**
7 (3) 62124 **BULLDOG SPIRIT** 62 (D) C Johnston 3-9-4 — **D Muscutt**

5-2 Feud, 3-1 Shadow Dance, 5-1 Golden Maverick, Bulldog Spirit, 13-2 Dubai Crystal, 12-1 Molinari, Fifth Harmonic.

2.00 Novice Stakes (2-Y-O: £16,200: 6f) (11)

1 (4) 10 **LUNAR SHINE** 41 (D) James Horton 9-8 — **P J McDonald**
2 (11) 41 **RAQIYA** 29 (D) Owen Burrows 9-8 — **James Doyle**
3 (8) 0 **ALL AGLEAM** 29 A Balding 9-2 — **L Morris**
4 (3) **CARPATHIAN** (H) J Ferguson 9-2 — **D Muscutt**
5 (9) **CHAUMET MORE** E J-Houghton 9-2 — **P Mulrennan**
6 (10) 3 **DREAM WHISPER** 14 (BF) C Appleby 9-2 — **W Buick**
7 (6) **ELEGANT APPEAL** K R Burke 9-2 — **P-L Jamin**
8 (1) 2 **LADY PAGASA** 14 C Hills 9-2 — **R Hornby**
9 (2) **OAKLAND PRINCESS** K R Burke 9-2 — **C Lee**
10 (7) **STAR JAMEELA** K Ryan 9-2 — **S Gray**
11 (5) 4 **TREAT OF TREATS** 32 K Ryan 9-2 — **T Eaves**

3-1 Lady Pagasa, 7-2 Raqiya, 4-1 Dream Whisper, 5-1 Lunar Shine, 10-1 Elegant Appeal, 14-1 Oakland Princess, Star Jameela, 20-1 Carpathian.

2.35 Handicap (£6,542: 5f) (13)

1 (8) -0066 **DIGITAL** 21 (D) K R Burke 5-9-12 — **Brandon Wilkie (7)**
2 (5) -1061 **NEVER DARK** 14 (D) I Jardine 6-9-12 — **W Pyle (5)**
3 (4) 44513 **SERGEANT PEP** 20 (D) C Cox 3-9-11 — **J Fahy**
4 (1) 61021 **MUKER** 21 (D) N Tinkler 5-9-11 — **A Jary (7)**
5 (10) 21141 **LEVEL UP** 39 (V,D) P Evans 4-9-9 — **James Doyle**
6 (11) 30160 **RIVERSWAY** 28 (P,CD) J Camacho 4-9-8 — **C Lee**
7 (13) -0140 **EEH BAH GUM** 22 (CD) I Furtado 8-9-7 — **Elle-May Croot (7)**
8 (3) 31213 **SOUL SEEKER** 18 (P,T,D) D O'Meara 6-9-7 — **W Buick**
9 (2) 15206 **MERESIDE ANGEL** 45 (BF,D) D & N Barron 4-9-6 — **R Hornby**
10 (7) 03-56 **ULTRAMARINE** 92 P Evans 4-9-4 — **T Eaves**
11 (9) 43460 **MATTICE** 22 (P,D) T Easterby 4-9-4 — **D Allan**
12 (12) 44-0 **FOX ISLAND** 85 L Williamson 3-9-0 — **Laura Coughlan (5)**
13 (6) 02132 **BAYRAAT** 13 T Tate 7-8-13 — **P Mulrennan**

9-2 Muker, 6-1 Never Dark, Soul Seeker, Level Up, 15-2 Sergeant Pep, 8-1 Bayraat, 10-1 Mereside Angel, Mattice.

3.10 Novice Stakes (2-Y-O: £5,400: 1m) (6)

1 (3) **BOLSENA** K Ryan 9-2 — **T Eaves**
2 (2) **DAZZLING JEWEL** C Appleby 9-2 — **W Buick**
3 (5) **ERANTHIS** K R Burke 9-2 — **C Lee**
4 (6) **LAURA BAY** D Menuisier 9-2 — **R Hornby**
5 (1) 4 **LINGUA FRANCA** 42 Sir M Prescott 9-2 — **L Morris**
6 (4) **SIMPLE ENDEAVOUR** A Balding 9-2 — **James Doyle**

Evens Dazzling Jewel, 9-2 Bolsena, 5-1 Eranthis, Simple Endeavour, 14-1 Lingua Franca, 20-1 Laura Bay.

3.45 Handicap (£13,500: 7f) (12)

1 (1) 34351 **PERSUASION** 7 (CD) D & N Barron 6-10-1(5ex) — **R Hornby**
2 (11) 24602 **STREET KID** 29 (P,D) K P De Foy 5-10-0 — **D Muscutt**
3 (4) 63125 **DIAMONDONTHEHILL** 11 (D) M Dods 5-9-13 — **P Mulrennan**
4 (9) -6301 **CANOODLED** 35 (D) E Walker 5-9-11 — **W Buick**
5 (10) 12063 **METABOLT** 10 (P,CD) D Loughnane 4-9-10 — **Laura Pearson**
6 (12) 04016 **EQUIANO SPRINGS** 28 (BF,D) T Tate 9-9-8 — **T Eaves**
7 (2) 10054 **SIAM FOX** 15 K Frost 5-9-8 — **J F Egan**
8 (3) 13004 **MANIGORDO** 9 (P,T,D) T Easterby 6-9-7 — **D Nolan**
9 (6) 51445 **RIOT** 15 (P,D) D O'Meara 6-9-7 — **James Doyle**
10 (7) 51514 **UGO GREGORY** 20 (P,T,CD) T Easterby 7-9-4 — **D Allan**
11 (5) 40203 **PRAIRIE FALCON** 21 (P,BF,D) M Dods 3-8-12 — **C Lee**
12 (8) 04223 **HE'S A GENTLEMAN** 2 H Palmer 4-8-11 — **Doubtful**

4-1 Persuasion, 11-2 Diamondonthehill, 13-2 Prairie Falcon, Canoodled, 15-2 Street Kid, 8-1 Riot, 10-1 Metabolt, Equiano Springs, Ugo Gregory.

4.20 Handicap (£4,449: 7f) (9)

1 (3) 25041 **RED MAIDS** 12 (D) M Rimell 3-9-11(6ex) — **W Buick**
2 (5) 3-062 **FOOLS AND HORSES** 28 C Cox 3-9-10 — **J Fahy**
3 (9) 31410 **BIPLANE** 65 (B,D) J Wainwright 5-9-10 — **P Mulrennan**
4 (7) 51304 **EPONINA** 28 (P,C,D) M Appleby 9-9-9 — **T Ladd**
5 (6) -4130 **ALSEEYERTHERE** 20 (T,D) Steph Hollinshead 5-9-7 — **D Allan**
6 (4) 0320- **SNOW GIRL** 357 P Evans 3-9-5 — **James Doyle**
7 (8) 00004 **HOOF IT HOOF IT** 21 (T) T Easterby 3-9-3 — **D Fentiman**
8 (2) 65446 **REVE DE MAGRITTE** 20 E De Giles 4-9-0 — **D Muscutt**
9 (1) 53036 **RHUBARB** 4 R J Price 6-8-11 — **L Morris**

6-4 Red Maids, 6-1 Fools And Horses, 7-1 Rhubarb, 8-1 Alseeyerthere, Biplane, 10-1 Eponina, 12-1 Hoof It Hoof It, 14-1 Snow Girl, 16-1 Reve De Magritte.

4.55 Handicap (£6,542: 1m 6f) (9)

1 (5) 36-56 **CALDWELL** 41 (P,T) L Russell 6-10-2 — **P Mulrennan**
2 (1) 02240 **ALPINE STROLL** 19 (B,D) E De Giles 5-10-2 — **D Muscutt**
3 (9) 63310 **SHARP DISTINCTION** 25 (T,D) Miss A Murphy 4-10-0 — **A Farragher (3)**
4 (8) 31050 **C'MON KENNY** 24 (P) I Williams 7-10-0 — **L Morris**
5 (2) 50430 **COOL PARTY** 37 (P) C Johnston 3-9-8 — **F Norton**
6 (3) 04234 **MARMARA SEA** 30 J Chapple-Hyam 3-9-8 — **W Buick**
7 (6) -3233 **CAN CAN GIRL** 13 (V,BF) T Easterby 5-9-7 — **D Allan**
8 (4) 51442 **DOUBLE OBAN** 21 H Palmer 3-9-5 — **C Lee**
9 (7) 4-454 **ALSHADHIAN** 18 (BF) R Beckett 3-9-3 — **R Hornby**

3-1 Can Can Girl, 7-2 Alshadhian, 6-1 Double Oban, 7-1 Marmara Sea, 8-1 Sharp Distinction, 10-1 C'mon Kenny, Caldwell, 12-1 Cool Party, Alpine Stroll.

Kempton Park

Rob Wright

5.55 Mbappe
6.30 Fire Demon
7.00 Lambert
7.30 Doha
8.00 Change Sings
8.30 Medieval Gold (nb)
9.00 Hourless (nap)

Going: standard to slow
Draw: 5f-1m, low numbers best — **Racing TV**

5.55 Nursery (2-Y-O: £3,140: 7f) (10)

1 (7) 33005 **QANDIL** 21 R Hannon 9-11 — **Tyrese Cameron (7)**
2 (2) 500 **MBAPPE** 18 E Walker 9-9 — **R Coakley**
3 (5) 0006 **ASPIRE TO GLORY** 39 (T) Alice Haynes 9-6 — **K O'Neill**
4 (4) 0600 **TENTATIVELY** 19 J Osborne 9-6 — **K Shoemark**
5 (9) 01504 **SEARCH** 18 J Butler 9-5 — **Dylan Hogan**
6 (8) 0002 **DUE CONSIDERATION** 10 Adrian Nicholls 9-4 — **C Murtagh**
7 (1) 6005P **BROOKLYN EXPRESS** 16 (B) Miss A Murphy 9-3 — **F Larson (3)**
8 (3) 00004 **IRRELEVANT** 4 (B) R Hughes 9-3 — **F Marsh**
9 (6) 5004 **EASEL** 25 J Portman 9-3 — **D Probert**
10 (10) 0000 **EAGLE LANDED** 26 J Butler 8-8 — **Molly Presland (7)**

9-4 Due Consideration, 4-1 Mbappe, 6-1 Search, 7-1 Irrelevant, 8-1 Aspire To Glory, 10-1 Easel, Qandil, 16-1 Brooklyn Express.

6.30 Novice Stakes (2-Y-O: £5,346: 7f) (14)

1 (5) 0 **ACES HIGH** 64 S & E Crisford 9-7 — **R Coakley**
2 (14) 46 **ALLEGORICAL** 21 R Beckett 9-7 — **Rossa Ryan**
3 (4) **CITY OF DELIGHT** D Menuisier 9-7 — **Kyle Strydom**
4 (9) **DARK VIPER** R Hannon 9-7 — **Alec Voikhansky (5)**
5 (3) **FARIZIO** R Beckett 9-7 — **Jason Watson**
6 (2) 02 **FIRE DEMON** 20 A Balding 9-7 — **D Probert**
7 (11) **HEATER** M Bell 9-7 — **K Shoemark**
8 (10) 64 **KHISAH BU THAILA** 23 W Knight 9-7 — **N Callan**
9 (12) 0 **KING OF LUCK** 49 Sir M Stoute 9-7 — **R Kingscote**
10 (8) **MULCIBER** (T) M Botti 9-7 — **B Loughnane (3)**
11 (6) 4 **PILOTO PARDO** 13 R Hannon 9-7 — **S Hitchcott**
12 (7) 0 **RESTRICTED** 16 C Banham 9-7 — **J Haynes**
13 (13) 0 **RUKAANA** 70 C Hills 9-7 — **R Havlin**
14 (1) **VICARIO** E Walker 9-2 — **T Marquand**

11-4 Fire Demon, 4-1 Allegorical, 7-1 Khisah Bu Thaila, 8-1 Farizio, 10-1 Piloto Pardo, King Of Luck, 14-1 Vicario, Heater.

7.00 Novice Stakes (2-Y-O: £5,346: 1m) (10)

1 (6) 611 **LAMBERT** 12 G Boughey 9-11 — **B Loughnane (3)**
2 (8) 501 **BEAUTY GENERATION** 31 (D) M Botti 9-9 — **Doubtful**
3 (3) **BATTLE OF OMDURMAN** Ollie Sangster 9-4 — **R Havlin**
4 (5) **BURLINGTON HOUSE** H Spiller 9-4 — **R Coakley**
5 (9) 0 **COCK AND BULL** 12 M Bell 9-4 — **Dylan Hogan**
6 (10) 5 **DUNSTAN** 16 R Beckett 9-4 — **Rossa Ryan**
7 (4) **HEBRIDEAN NOMAD** A Balding 9-4 — **D Probert**
8 (7) 0 **RUDIES IN COURT** 25 M Attwater 9-2 — **P Bradley (3)**
9 (2) **NO MISCHIEF** J Portman 8-13 — **T Whelan**
10 (1) 00 **ORANGE ROSETTA** 9 (H) L Dace 8-11 — **A Keeley (3)**

8-13 Lambert, 4-1 Dunstan, 7-1 Hebridean Nomad, 8-1 Battle Of Omdurman, 20-1 No Mischief, Burlington House, 50-1 Cock And Bull, 100-1 others.

7.30 Fillies' Stakes (£7,731: 1m) (9)

1 (2) **ANGEL OF THE ROCK** A Watson 3-9-2 — **Georgia Dobie**
2 (1) -0043 **BECCARA ROSE** 29 C Fellowes 3-9-2 — **H Davies**
3 (5) 22205 **COPY ARTIST** 48 (BF) A Balding 3-9-2 — **D Probert**
4 (8) **DOHA** R Beckett 3-9-2 — **Rossa Ryan**
5 (4) 02-45 **IVORY MADONNA** 23 (B) R Spencer 3-9-2 — **B Loughnane**
6 (3) 6 **KUMARI STAR** 58 G Baker 3-9-2 — **N Callan**
7 (7) 04346 **LUDMILLA** 46 (P) J & T Gosden 3-9-2 — **K Shoemark**
8 (9) 43 **ROMILDA** 34 W Haggas 3-9-2 — **T Marquand**
9 (6) 64 **VENUS ROSEWATER** 21 (T) J & T Gosden 3-9-2 — **R Havlin**

9-4 Copy Artist, 11-2 Beccara Rose, 6-1 Venus Rosewater, Ludmilla, Doha, 7-1 Ivory Madonna, 12-1 Angel Of The Rock, 14-1 Romilda, 33-1 Kumari Star.

8.00 Handicap (£4,187: 6f) (12)

1 (4) -1101 **BILL PLUMB** 53 (CD) P McEntee 4-9-10 — **BLoughnane (3)**
2 (6) 00-30 **BELLE FOURCHE** 29 (P,T,D) D O'Meara 4-9-10 — **J Watson**
3 (7) 43256 **NOGO'S DREAM** 10 R Hughes 3-9-8 — **G Rooke**
4 (10) 64135 **MIGHTY GURKHA** 13 (B,BF,CD) A Watson 5-9-8 — **T Fisher**
5 (3) 35000 **DISTINGUISHED LADY** 20 (D) Darryll Holland 3-9-8 — **Rossa Ryan**
6 (1) -4340 **SASSY BELLE** 29 (BF,D) E Walker 3-9-8 — **R Coakley**
7 (11) 2130 **NAASER** 141 (H) R Fell & S Murray 3-9-8 — **T Marquand**
8 (12) 61043 **LILKIAN** 4 (CD) Darryll Holland 6-9-7 — **Liam Wright (7)**
9 (2) 30413 **CHANGE SINGS** 10 (C) E J-Houghton 3-9-7 — **G Downing**
10 (8) 32005 **FOX MASTER** 26 (D) R Varian 3-9-5 — **A Keeley (3)**
11 (9) 00-00 **UNSUNG HERO** 8 (B,C) H Main 4-9-5 — **Gina Mangan (3)**
12 (5) 31135 **FULL PRIME** 86 (CD) T Ward 3-9-4 — **R Kingscote**

4-1 Bill Plumb, 11-2 Mighty Gurkha, 6-1 Change Sings, 7-1 Fox Master, 8-1 Nogo's Dream, Sassy Belle, 10-1 Full Prime, Lilkian.

8.30 Handicap (£4,187: 1m 4f) (6)

1 (4) 1051- **STUDY THE STARS** 317 (CD) G Baker 5-10-3 — **N Callan**
2 (2) 33406 **NOBLE MASQUERADE** 22 (B,C) E J-Houghton 6-10-0 — **Georgia Dobie (3)**
3 (3) 53161 **INTERGALACTICAT** 23 (P,C) J Fanshawe 3-9-7 — **R Coakley**
4 (1) -0061 **PROSECCO** 43 A Balding 3-9-6 — **D Probert**
5 (5) 5662 **MEDIEVAL GOLD** 10 (P) W Haggas 3-9-0 — **T Marquand**
6 (6) 04344 **TIMELY ESCAPE** 22 (P) C Hills 3-8-12 — **K Shoemark**

11-4 Intergalacticat, 3-1 Prosecco, 7-2 Medieval Gold, 4-1 Study The Stars, 10-1 Noble Masquerade, Timely Escape.

9.00 Handicap (£3,140: 2m) (11)

1 (3) 50013 **LIBERATED LAD** 12 (T,C) B Brookhouse 5-10-2 — **L Catton**
2 (6) 04453 **SOPHAR SOGOOD** 25 (P,D) J Butler 6-10-0 — **Morgan Cole**
3 (10) 32533 **IMPERIAL CULT** 21 R Cook & J Bridger 4-10-0 — **Gina Mangan (3)**
4 (11) 54060 **SHIBUYA SONG** 20 R Phillips 4-9-13 — **Kaiya Fraser (5)**
5 (7) 60/00 **CHANKAYA** 7 (P) Mitchell Hunt 6-9-11 — **Mia Nicholls (7)**
6 (4) 00024 **GAUTREY** 20 A Carroll 4-9-9 — **Rossa Ryan**
7 (2) 01623 **TEAM ENDEAVOUR** 9 (P,D) I Williams 4-9-5 — **R Kingscote**
8 (8) 35264 **PLEDGE OF PEACE** 30 (V) P McEntee 6-9-2 — **Josephine Gordon**
9 (5) 0-040 **GUILTY PARTY** 36 (B) P Chamings 6-9-2 — **G Rooke**
10 (9) 01524 **HOURLESS** 30 (BF) A King 3-8-8 — **D Probert**
11 (1) 00565 **ALODIA** 29 S Kirk 3-8-5 — **K O'Neill**

7-2 Hourless, 4-1 Sophar Sogood, 5-1 Liberated Lad, 6-1 Team Endeavour, Imperial Cult, 7-1 Gautrey, 12-1 Pledge Of Peace, 16-1 Shibuya Song.

Blinkered first time: Kempton Park
5.55 Irrelevant. 8.00 Unsung Hero.

Newcastle

Rob Wright

2.10 Crystal Guard
2.45 Barrolo
3.20 Concert Boy
3.55 Burning The Bails
4.30 Gamraan
5.05 Apocalyx
5.40 Thunder Princess
6.10 Mr Heinz

Going: standard
Draw: no advantage — **Sky Sports Racing**

2.10 Handicap (£3,245: 1m 4f) (10)

1 (2) 31322 **PRINCE ACHILLE** 21 (B,BF) J O'Keeffe 4-9-10 — **J Garritty**
2 (6) 24332 **LORD TORRANAGA** 9 (BF,D) P Kirby 8-9-9 — **G Lee**
3 (10) 50156 **IDEAL DREAM** 87 (CD) J J Davies 5-9-8 — **Amie Waugh (5)**
4 (7) 35005 **CRYSTAL GUARD** 22 (B,CD) I Jardine 5-9-8 — **B Curtis**
5 (8) 65002 **TRAILBLAZER** 10 (P) A Nicol 4-9-6 — **D Tudhope**
6 (9) 54504 **INTERNATIONAL LAW** 36 (V,C,D) A Brittain 9-9-5 — **C Hardie**
7 (5) 03460 **TIBERIO FORCE** 21 (B) Simon Whitaker 4-9-1 — **L Edmunds**
8 (1) 40/56 **TOSCAN GENIUS** 11 (H) B Ellison 6-9-0 — **B Robinson**
9 (4) 0-365 **STRONG TEAM** J75 (P) C Grant 10-9-0 — **Mark Winn (3)**
10 (3) 0-605 **THOMAS CRANMER** 11 Miss T Jackson 9-9-0 — **P Dennis**

2-1 Prince Achille, 100-30 Lord Torranaga, 9-2 Trailblazer, 10-1 International Law, Thomas Cranmer, Ideal Dream, 16-1 Tiberio Force, Toscan Genius.

2.45 Handicap (£3,873: 1m 2f) (13)

1 (1) -5506 **IRISH FLAME** 39 (P,C) M Dods 4-10-4 — **C Beasley**
2 (12) 2-000 **GLORY NIGHTS** 29 M Loughnane 4-10-4 — **Mark Winn (3)**
3 (2) 0-356 **SAGAUTEUR** 43 (T,CD) R Menzies 7-10-2 — **A Rawlinson**
4 (3) 04600 **BUCKSHAW VILLAGE** 62 D Carroll 4-10-0 — **Z Wheatley**
5 (11) 52063 **DON'T LOOK BACK** 40 (D) L Russell 5-9-13 — **R Sexton (3)**
6 (6) -0045 **ELSHAAMEQ** 64 (T) K Frost 4-9-12 — **B Robinson**
7 (7) 10045 **DANIELSFLYER** 23 (C) D Thompson 9-9-12 — **S B Kirrane**
8 (5) -3012 **FLEUR DE MER** 31 H Palmer 3-9-10 — **J Hart**
9 (9) 60030 **MERCURIUS POWER** 21 (T,C) Jessica Macey 5-9-9 — **B Sanderson (3)**
10 (10) 11211 **BARROLO** 20 (D) G Tuer 3-9-8 — **S James**
11 (8) 03422 **WESTERN BEAT** 12 (V,CD) M & D Easterby 5-9-8 — **Joanna Mason**
12 (4) 65030 **CUSACK** 62 (P,CD) D Thompson 5-9-6 — **P Dennis**
13 (13) 540 **QUEEN OF SPARTA** 39 G Boughey 3-9-3 — **C Fallon**

3-1 Barrolo, 9-2 Western Beat, Fleur De Mer, 8-1 Don't Look Back, 10-1 Queen Of Sparta, 14-1 Sagauteur, Danielsflyer, Elshaameq.

3.20 Handicap (Div I: £3,873: 7f) (12)

1 (12) 0-000 **MOSSBAWN** 59 (D) N Mechie 6-10-2 — **A Breslin (3)**
2 (2) 00134 **ROCKET ROD** 20 (CD) G Harker 6-10-0 — **S James**
3 (5) 60033 **EMPEROR CARADOC** 30 (D) P Midgley 4-9-13 — **G Lee**
4 (7) 60044 **SUN POWER** 2 (V,D) A Brown 6-9-12 — **R Scott**
5 (10) -4100 **ELLABELLA** 112 (P,T) I Jardine 5-9-12 — **A Mullen**
6 (6) 21120 **CODE PURPLE** 56 (CD) B Haslam 4-9-11 — **Joanna Mason**
7 (3) 42621 **SIDNEY'S SON** 16 N Tinkler 3-9-10 — **F McManoman**
8 (9) 00353 **CONCERT BOY** 2 (P,CD) D O'Meara 3-9-9 — **D Tudhope**
9 (8) 0-600 **GREY FORCE ONE** 21 (V) C Fairhurst 3-9-8 — **A Brookes**
10 (11) 30423 **SLIPPIN JIMMY** 27 (P,CD) R Fahey 3-9-7 — **B Garritty**
11 (4) 00600 **ABNAA** 35 (B,CD) A Brittain 6-9-6 — **C Hardie**
12 (1) 55321 **ROCKIN ROSA** 24 (P,CD) R Carr 3-8-10 — **JP Sullivan**

7-2 Sidney's Son, 5-1 Slippin Jimmy, 6-1 Emperor Caradoc, Code Purple, 7-1 Rockin Rosa, Concert Boy, Sun Power, 10-1 Rocket Rod.

3.55 Handicap (Div II: £3,873: 7f) (11)

1 (6) 32-06 **ABRUZZO MIA** 206 M Dods 6-10-2 — **C Beasley**
2 (10) 14300 **SECRET ROAD** 13 T Davidson 5-9-13 — **J Hart**
3 (5) 00560 **KALGANOV** 13 (T) D O'Meara 4-9-13 — **D Tudhope**
4 (8) 11240 **DANZART** 49 (H,D) Mrs Stella Barclay 5-9-12 — **C Howarth**
5 (4) 10-00 **SPELLS AT DAWN** 63 (D) Alex French 4-9-11 — **G Wood**
6 (7) 5-500 **PEMBROKESHIRE** 65 (H) I Jardine 3-9-10 — **G Lee**
7 (3) 05250 **SPARTAN FIGHTER** 34 (V,CD) A Brittain 6-9-9 — **H Russell**
8 (2) 52012 **KATS BOB** 27 (P,BF,D) I Jardine 5-9-8 — **A Mullen**
9 (11) 33214 **CARIBBEAN SUNSET** 27 (C) G Tuer 5-9-7 — **O Stammers**
10 (9) 36200 **BURNING THE BAILS** 39 (P) R M Smith 3-9-7 — **B Curtis**
11 (1) /00-6 **SASSOON** 38 (P,D) B Haslam 7-8-13 — **Mark Winn (3)**

5-2 Kats Bob, 9-2 Danzart, Abruzzo Mia, 6-1 Caribbean Sunset, Secret Road, 7-1 Kalganov, 20-1 Burning The Bails, Pembrokeshire.

4.30 Nursery (2-Y-O: £7,128: 1m) (6)

1 (3) 03320 **GAMRAAN** 15 R Fahey 9-9 — **B Garritty**
2 (5) 2604 **DARK ENCOUNTER** 15 K R Burke 9-7 — **S James**
3 (6) 446 **ALPEN POWER** 26 C Johnston 9-4 — **J Fanning**
4 (4) 665 **SHORT CIRCUIT** 30 (P) A Watson 9-4 — **J Bryan**
5 (2) 4213 **CONSOLING** 13 O Pears 9-1 — **C Hardie**
6 (1) 03014 **STAR OF LAZISE** 8 (C) Gemma Tutty 8-12 — **C Beasley**

9-4 Dark Encounter, 7-2 Short Circuit, 4-1 Consoling, 5-1 Gamraan, 15-2 Alpen Power, 8-1 Star Of Lazise.

5.05 Novice Stakes (2-Y-O: £5,373: 6f) (11)

1 (10) 01 **TREFOR** 13 (D) C Hills 9-10 — **C Fallon**
2 (6) 2 **APOCALYX** 21 R Fahey 9-4 — **B Garritty**
3 (2) 20 **APPELLANT** 41 C Fellowes 9-4 — **D Tudhope**
4 (1) 0 **BRUMMELL** 21 J Camacho 9-4 — **R Sexton (3)**
5 (11) 0 **BURY LANE** 42 E Bethell 9-4 — **C Rodriguez**
6 (7) 35 **GUNFIGHTER** 29 H Palmer 9-4 — **J Hart**
7 (5) 4 **INDICATION COURT** 70 Craig Lidster 9-4 — **S James**
8 (3) 5 **PIANOFORTE** 23 A Balding 9-4 — **B Curtis**
9 (9) 40 **SALAMANCA LAD** 25 R Fahey 9-4 — **J Garritty**
10 (4) 6 **THE LIEGEMAN** 105 A Watson 9-4 — **J Bryan**
11 (8) **PLEASE PLEASE ME** P Kirby 8-13 — **A Breslin (3)**

5-2 Apocalyx, 100-30 Trefor, 5-1 Appellant, 6-1 Gunfighter, 8-1 Indication Court, 12-1 Pianoforte, 14-1 The Liegeman, 16-1 Brummell.

5.40 Novice Stakes (£4,104: 6f) (8)

1 (4) 41 **LOVE LIES** 22 (D) A Watson 3-9-7 — **D Tudhope**
2 (7) 03 **CHARENCEY** 15 I Williams 3-9-5 — **P Mathers**
3 (2) 0 **HELLO MENAHI** 27 R Fell & S Murray 3-9-5 — **J Hart**
4 (1) 60 **BONNY SCOT** 22 I Jardine 3-9-0 — **A Mullen**
5 (3) 0 **MARGOT ROBBIE** 199 G Oldroyd 3-9-0 — **H Russell**
6 (5) 0-0 **MINCHINHAMPTON** 28 A Brown 3-9-0 — **C Beasley**
7 (6) 3 **THUNDER PRINCESS** 20 J Fanshawe 3-9-0 — **R Scott**
8 (8) 0 **TOP GUN TINA** 20 D Thompson 3-9-0 — **S B Kirrane**

10-11 Thunder Princess, 15-8 Love Lies, 6-1 Charencey, 20-1 Bonny Scot, Margot Robbie, 50-1 Hello Menahi, Top Gun Tina, 66-1 Minchinhampton.

6.10 Handicap (£3,245: 1m) (14)

1 (13) 05126 **MR STRUTTER** 18 (BF,CD) D Thompson 9-9-9 — **A Elliott**
2 (3) -6405 **ROYAL PROSPECT** 24 (T,CD) L Mullaney 8-9-7 — **S B Kirrane**
3 (1) 00233 **GLOBAL TYCOON** 25 (B) Joseph Parr 4-9-6 — **H Burns (3)**
4 (2) 60400 **RUMNOTRED** 36 Mrs Stella Barclay 4-9-5 — **C Howarth (5)**
5 (9) 22215 **RUM RUNNER** 23 (CD) G Harker 8-9-5 — **S James**
6 (4) 00506 **EXPLORERS WAY** 9 (P) B Ellison 4-9-4 — **B Robinson**
7 (8) 03040 **TEES GEORGE** 36 Adrian Nicholls 3-9-4 — **B McHugh**
8 (10) 60400 **ALJARDAA** 36 P Morris 5-9-4 — **C Hardie**
9 (6) 06005 **COPPER MOUNTAIN** 9 (T,V,D) M & D Easterby 4-9-3 — **Joanna Mason**
10 (7) 64R-0 **BIG MUDDY** 79 Suzzanne France 6-9-3 — **F McManoman**
11 (12) /0036 **THE GREY BANDIT** 15 J Stimpson 6-9-2 — **J Fisher (5)**
12 (14) 32464 **NAADYAA** 23 (T) Joseph Parr 4-9-1 — **B Curtis**
13 (5) 32360 **MR HEINZ** 11 (B) Simon Whitaker 4-9-0 — **P Dennis**
14 (11) 04006 **WOLF OF KINGSTREET** 20 (P) R Menzies 3-8-9 — **G Lee**

11-4 Mr Strutter, 9-2 Rum Runner, 6-1 Global Tycoon, 7-1 Copper Mountain, 8-1 Royal Prospect, 10-1 Naadyaa, 12-1 Mr Heinz, Explorers Way.

Course specialists

Ascot: Trainers O Burrows, 8 winners from 37 runners, 21.6%; E Walker, 17 from 100, 17%; W Haggas, 30 from 205, 14.6%. **Jockeys** Saffie Osborne, 10 winners from 58 rides, 17.2%; J Crowley, 30 from 205, 14.6%.

Haydock Park: Trainers C Appleby, 18 from 57, 31.6%; R Beckett, 28 from 103, 27.2%; O Burrows, 5 from 21, 23.8%. **Jockeys** W Buick, 19 from 78, 24.4%; James Doyle, 28 from 127, 22%.

Kempton Park: Trainers R Varian, 65 from 276, 23.6%; S & E Crisford, 24 from 110, 21.8%; J & T Gosden, 34 from 160, 21.2%. **Jockeys** Kaiya Fraser, 3 from 11, 27.3%; A Voikhansky, 5 from 29, 17.2%.

Newcastle: Trainers A Nicol, 4 from 15, 26.7%; A Balding, 26 from 107, 24.3%; A Watson, 36 from 148, 24.3%. **Jockeys** D Tudhope, 63 from 287, 22%; B A Curtis, 79 from 409, 19.3%.

Yesterday's racing results

Carlisle

Going: good to firm (good in places)

4.35 (5f 182yd) 1, **Rainbow Rain** (T Eaves, 9-2); 2, Dream Deal (3-1 fav); 3, Keep Me Stable (12-1). 14 ran. NR: Rain Cap, South Dakota Sioux. Nk, 1l. Miss Tracy Waggott.

5.05 (5f) 1, **Secret Command** (C Murtagh, 28-1); 2, Sergeant Mayer (11-4); 3, Bella Camina (33-1). 10 ran. 2¼l, sh hd. Adrian Nicholls.

5.35 (5f) 1, **Opal Storm** (Aiden Brookes, 66-1); 2, Wee Fat Mac (9-2); 3, Canaria Prince (13-2). 10 ran. NR: Astapor, Basholo. Hd, 1½l. C W Fairhurst.

6.05 (7f 173yd) 1, **Victory Shout** (S H James, 5-4 fav); 2, Silent Move (7-2); 3, Love Safari (9-1). 5 ran. 9l, 2½l. K R Burke.

6.35 (7f 173yd) 1, **Yeeeaah** (P J McDonald, 11-2); 2, Loom Large (40-1); 3, Cosa Sara (11-1). 12 ran. NR: Chinese Spirit. 1½l, sh hd. T Davidson.

7.05 (1m 1f) 1, **Imperial Quarter** (B A Curtis, 2-5 fav); 2, Man Of Monaco (7-1); 3, Best Guess (125-1). 5 ran. 3¾l, ½l. R Varian.

7.35 (1m 6f 32yd) 1, **Marbuzet** (D Allan, 9-2 jt-fav); 2, Merrijig (11-2); 3, Bobby Shaftoe (18-1). 10 ran. Nk, ¾l. T D Easterby.

Placepot: £115.40.
Quadpot: £15.30.

Haydock Park

Going: good

2.00 (1m 3f 140yd) 1, **She's A Novelty** (Miss Brodie Hampson, 5-2 fav); 2, Unplugged (4-1); 3, Super Stars (12-1). 8 ran. NR: She's Out Of Reach. 1¾l, 8l. F O'Brien.

2.30 (6f) 1, **Elmonjed** (Tom Marquand, 4-6 fav); 2, Robbo (11-1); 3, Finbar Furey (4-1). 10 ran. Nk, 1¼l. W J Haggas.

3.00 (5f) 1, **Angel Shared** (D C Costello, 9-2); 2, Be Here Now (15-8 jt-fav); 3, Goodeveningmrbond (15-8 jt-fav). 4 ran. NR: Out Of Line. 1l, 6½l. Steph Hollinshead.

3.30 (7f 212yd) 1, **Legend Of Time** (W Buick, 9-4 fav); 2, Wafei (100-30); 3, L'Ennemi (3-1). 8 ran. NR: Sedgemoor. Sh hd, 1¼l. C Appleby.

4.05 (6f 212yd) 1, **Chic Colombine** (W Buick, 9-4 fav); 2, Commander Crouch (6-1); 3, John Steed (33-1). 7 ran. NR: Miggy Magic. 3¼l, ½l. G Boughey.

4.40 (1m 2f 42yd) 1, **Sapphire Seas** (W Buick, 4-1); 2, Veil Of Shadows (9-1); 3, Ermesinde (11-1). 6 ran. 2¼l, 1l. C Appleby.

5.10 (1m 3f 140yd) 1, **Real Terms** (Oliver Stammers, 11-4 jt-fav); 2, Typical Woman (11-4 jt-fav); 3, Bookmark (14-1). 6 ran. NR: Fantizzy. 2¼l, 1½l. Grant Tuer.

Placepot: £131.50. **Quadpot: £63.10.**

Salisbury

Going: good to firm (good in places)

2.10 (1m) 1, **Power of Darkness** (Mikkel Mortensen, 100-30 jt-fav); 2, Racing Demon (6-1); 3, Uncle Dick (100-30 jt-fav). 7 ran. Sh hd, 1½l. C Fellowes.

2.40 (1m) 1, **Cambridge** (R L Moore, 11-10 fav); 2, Houstonn (14-1); 3, City Burglar (2-1). 12 ran. Sh hd, 4¼l. A P O'Brien.

3.10 (6f 213yd) 1, **Skellet** (Rossa Ryan, 5-6 fav); 2, Serene Seraph (7-4); 3, Times Edition (12-1). 9 ran. 1¼l, 5½l. R M Beckett.

3.40 (6f) 1, **Juniper Berries** (C Bishop, 16-1); 2, Dorothy Lawrence (9-1); 3, Soprano (11-4 fav). 12 ran. NR: Les Bleus, Majestic Beauty, Navassa Island. Sh hd, 1¼l. Eve Johnson Houghton.

4.15 (6f) 1, **Frankness** (Oisin Murphy, 13-2); 2, Al Simmo (8-1); 3, Shades Of Summer (8-1). 10 ran. NR: Silent Flame. 1l, nk. A M Balding.

4.45 (1m) 1, **Just Bring It** (Rossa Ryan, 2-1); 2, Garden Route (5-4 fav); 3, Sly Madam (12-1). 5 ran. NR: Stormbuster. Sh hd, 5½l. C G Cox.

5.15 (1m 1f 201yd) 1, **Le Mans** (R L Moore, 9-2); 2, Morcar (14-1); 3, Alice Knyvet (4-1). 8 ran. NR: Tudor. 1¾l, ns. R Hannon.

Placepot: £22.40. **Quadpot: £8.20.**

Southwell

Going: good

1.45 (2m 4f 88yd ch) 1, **Mystic Man** (Ben Bromley, 5-4 fav); 2, Tedwin Hills (3-1); 3, Fox's Socks (28-1). 8 ran. NR: Cheer's Delboy. 7½l, 19l. Harry Derham.

2.18 (3m 1f 185yd ch) 1, **Swapped** (Phillip Armson, 100-30); 2, Massons Castle (66-1); 3, Ecossais (9-2). 7 ran. 31l, 8½l. C & A & Pogson.

2.48 (1m 7f 182yd hdle) 1, **Manimole** (Sam Twiston-Davies, 13-8 fav); 2, Book of Secrets (11-2); 3, Sobegrand (6-1). 8 ran. NR: Tara Vango. 47l, 7½l. N A Twiston-Davies.

3.18 (1m 7f 182yd hdle) 1, **Swaffham Bulbeck** (Ciaran Gethings, 5-1); 2, Nibras Gold (9-2); 3, Pillar Of Steel (7-2). 6 ran. 2½l, nk. S Edmunds.

3.55 (1m 7f 182yd hdle) 1, **Baikal** (Lee Edwards, 8-1); 2, Ez Tiger (2-1 fav); 3, Star Legend (4-1). 9 ran. Sh hd, 1l. A West.

4.25 (1m 7f 182yd hdle) 1, **Shuil Donn** (B S Hughes, 11-1); 2, Frisco Queen (3-1 fav); 3, Cawthorne Cracker (10-1). 8 ran. NR: Dee Day Landing. 6l, ½l. Paul Collins.

4.55 (3m 60yd hdle) 1, **Blue Sans** (Mr Tom Broughton, 5-2 jt-fav); 2, Broomfields Cave (5-2 jt-fav); 3, Prussia With Love (25-1). 7 ran. NR: Tommydan. 3¼l, 22l. F O'Brien.

Placepot: £85.30. **Quadpot: £28.70.**

Wolverhampton

Going: standard

5.45 (6f 20yd) 1, **Beyond Borders** (Jonny Peate, 7-1); 2, Succession (22-1); 3, Suicide Blonde (11-2). 11 ran. NR: Skilled Master. 1l, 2¼l. K R Burke.

6.15 (6f 20yd) 1, **Minnetonka** (S M Levey, 8-1); 2, International Girl (14-1); 3, Razzam (5-1). 12 ran. NR: Crimson Angel. ½l, ¾l. R Hannon.

6.45 (1m 142yd) 1, **Yeoman** (Callum Shepherd, 100-30); 2, Supaspecialawesome (8-1); 3, Moonspirit (5-2 fav). 10 ran. Hd, hd. J R Fanshawe.

7.15 (1m 142yd) 1, **Koy Koy** (Billy Loughnane, 5-1); 2, Farasi Lane (9-2); 3, Parlando (5-1). 11 ran. 1¼l, 1l. G Boughey.

7.45 (1m 1f 104yd) 1, **Painters Palette** (Frederick Larson, 9-2); 2, Naxos (7-2 fav); 3, Graignes (10-1). 11 ran. 2¼l, ¾l. R Menzies.

8.15 (1m 5f 219yd) 1, **Diamond Bay** (S M Levey, 15-2); 2, Glenister (9-2); 3, Faylaq (9-2). 11 ran. 2¼l, ¾l. T Ward.

8.45 (6f 20yd) 1, **Get It** (P Mulrennan, 11-1); 2, Tiger Crusade (11-1); 3, Aramis Grey (9-1). 13 ran. 1¼l, hd. George Baker.

Jackpot: Not won. Pool of £18,708.26 carried forward to Ascot today.
Placepot: £43.70. **Quadpot: £6.60.**

India tour doubt for Stokes as he hints at knee surgery

Steve James



England v New Zealand
First ODI, Sophia Gardens
Today, 12.30pm
TV: Sky Sports Main Event/Cricket, Radio: 5 Live Sports Extra



ZAC GOODWIN/PA

Stokes was practising with both bat and ball at Sophia Gardens yesterday but is not expected to bowl in the first ODI today

Ben Stokes is back in one-day international cricket in time for the World Cup, but the mystery surrounding his left knee has only deepened on the eve of his return.

After the Ashes it was widely presumed that Stokes would try to fix the troublesome joint — either through surgery or prolonged rest — before England's next red-ball assignment in India in January. But then came the surprise news that he was reversing his decision to retire from the 50-over format, with England preparing for their defence of the trophy they won four years ago in India next month.

England were always going to choose the 32-year-old once he had made himself available, particularly after he dug them out of a hole to win the T20 World Cup last year, and he confirmed that he would bat at No 4 but will not bowl — not only today in Cardiff, in the first of four ODIs against New Zealand, but at the World Cup too. It was when he was asked about his knee, however, that things became very confusing.

First he said, "I've had some good conversations with specialists in different fields around rehab and a plan going forward after the World Cup. There will be the potential of something happening after the World Cup." Which sounded very much like he was going under the knife after the tournament.

But then when asked whether his participation in the India Test series would be affected, Stokes said: "There will be a time I make clear what's going on, but I don't think now is the right time to do that, with everything we have got coming up."

Quizzed on whether he would be at the Indian Premier League next year, the Test captain merely replied: "It's too far away to worry about that."

Furthermore, when addressing resuming his role as an all-rounder, he talked about "doing some more intensive work from now till summer next year, making sure I give myself the best chance I can of playing the next two to three years as an all-rounder".

He added: "You go through different thoughts. At the end of the Ashes, when I had another difficult series with the ball, [it was] 'My knee is sore, can't be arsed with this anymore, just too hard,' but then you pull yourself away from that and keep pushing on. I get bored in the field when not a bowler."

Stokes had announced his retirement in July last year after an ODI against South Africa at his home ground in Durham, but explained his volte-face by saying: "It's been a conversation that's been ongoing with [captain] Jos [Butler] and Motty [the white-ball head coach Matthew Mott]. We kept it internal and had catch-ups along the road.

"When you think of it from a personal point of view, we won the World Cup in 2019 and the closer and closer it got to it, I started thinking differently around that. Going to India and trying to defend the World Cup was a big reason in saying, 'I'm available for selection if you want to choose me to come.'"

Of course, the upshot of Stokes's return has been the contentious omission of Harry Brook from the provisional World Cup squad of 15. Brook has been added to the squad for these four ODIs but was not in Cardiff for practice yesterday. Neither was Dawid Malan, with both unlikely to play today, but there is as much ambiguity surrounding Brook's possible reprieve for the tournament as there is about Stokes's knee. Even though Mott has strongly hinted that Brook, 24, will make the squad, it is far from clear who will be dropped and how that news will be broken to a man already told he was going to India.

Stokes smiled when asked about the Brook dilemma. "Yeah. I know how that feels, where it is," he said. "I don't have to worry about that here."

England's ODI schedule

Sept 8 v New Zealand (Sophia Gardens)
Sept 10 v New Zealand (The Ageas Bowl)
Sept 13 v New Zealand (The Oval)
Sept 15 v New Zealand (Lord's)
Sept 20 v Ireland (Headingley)
Sept 23 v Ireland (Trent Bridge)
Sept 26 v Ireland (Bristol)

Oct 5 World Cup starts v New Zealand

This is the first ODI between the teams since that famous final at Lord's on 2019, with the pair meeting on October 5 in Ahmedabad to kick off the tournament this time.

Stokes is confident, while acknowledging that the rest of the world has caught up with the freewheeling style of play that took England way ahead of the pack under Eoin Morgan between 2015 and 2019. "I think everyone knows and it's not arrogant for us to say that we're a very good team," he said. "We've got a very good depth of personnel to choose from and our record since the World Cup has been very good [they did lose eight of ten ODIs, though, in a period last year that stretched into 2023].

"You've seen teams have caught up to how England were playing and being so successful. The way Morgs [Eoin Morgan] led the team propelled us to another level, above other teams on our best days. We knew if we played our best game of cricket, teams couldn't compete with us. Since then, you've seen other teams have gone up another level."

Ashley and IPL franchise in race to buy Headingley

Elizabeth Ammon

Mike Ashley and Rajasthan Royals are in the running to buy Headingley, with Yorkshire members set to vote on a proposed sale for about £23 million which would allow the county to stave off administration.

There are three prospective bids for the stadium in Leeds: one from the former Newcastle United owner Ashley, one from Rajasthan's Indian Premier League franchise, and another from an unnamed consortium of overseas venture capitalists. There was originally some interest from Saudi Arabia but The Times understands that this has not progressed.

The windfall from the sale would allow Yorkshire to pay off its £16 million debt to the Colin Graves Trust. It is due to make a payment of £500,000 towards this at the end of next month.

Ashley is understood to want naming rights as part of a deal worth about £23 million. This would be enough cover the debt that is owed to the family trust of Graves, the former Yorkshire and ECB chairman, and inject some cash into the county, which is also carrying other historic debts — not least from the payoffs it had to make to staff sacked after racism allegations by their former player, Azeem Rafiq.

Rajasthan Royals, part-owned by the English businessman Manoj Badale, is understood to have offered £25 million with the caveat that the IPL franchise takes full control of Yorkshire, meaning the county would then be privately owned rather than member-owned. The proposals from Ashley and a third unnamed bidder would mean the overall ownership of the county remains in the hands of members.

In the short term, the Rajasthan rescue package would be a loan note to Yorkshire, which would allow the county to service the debt to the Graves Trust, before switching it to equity at a future date. It is understood that the IPL franchise eventually wants a majority shareholding of the county and is likely to want to bring in its own management team to run the club.

If this happened, Yorkshire would become the fourth of the 18 first-class counties to cease being member-owned, along with Hampshire, Durham and Northamptonshire.

Yorkshire's board now wants to present a rescue package to its members in the next few weeks. The county had hoped to secure a refinancing package that would not involve a sale and lease option for Headingley, but the present cost of borrowing — with rising interest rates and a limited capacity for increasing revenue — has made that a much more difficult option.

City profit from Uefa's new funding plan

Martyn Ziegler Chief Sports Reporter

Manchester City are in line to be the biggest winners from Uefa's new funding formula for the Champions League from next season.

Uefa is changing the coefficient funding system which determines how much clubs are paid based on their historical performances in Europe — instead of the previous ten years, the amount will be calculated over the past five seasons. That will lead to City becoming the top-ranked side in Europe, replacing Real Madrid. Four English sides are among the top seven clubs, based on the five-year ranking: City, Chelsea, Liverpool and Manchester United.

Uefa insists its new system will be fairer as it is reducing by 10 per cent the amount it distributes via coefficient funding and the TV market pool — which is based on a country's TV market — with more distributed as performance bonuses based on how far a club progresses in the tournament. There will also be a bigger qualification bonus for all 36 teams in the new competition — worth £28.9 million per team, up from £16.3 million this season.

Given that Uefa is estimating a 33 per cent rise in its income for its club competitions, should City win the first revamped Champions League in 2025 their earnings will rise from around £120 million last season to more than £160 million.

Meanwhile, solidarity payments to clubs not playing in European competitions will rise from 4 per cent to 7 per cent in the 2024-27 cycle.

Regulator won't be part of FA

Martyn Ziegler

The new independent football regulator will be a stand-alone body separate from the FA, the government has said.

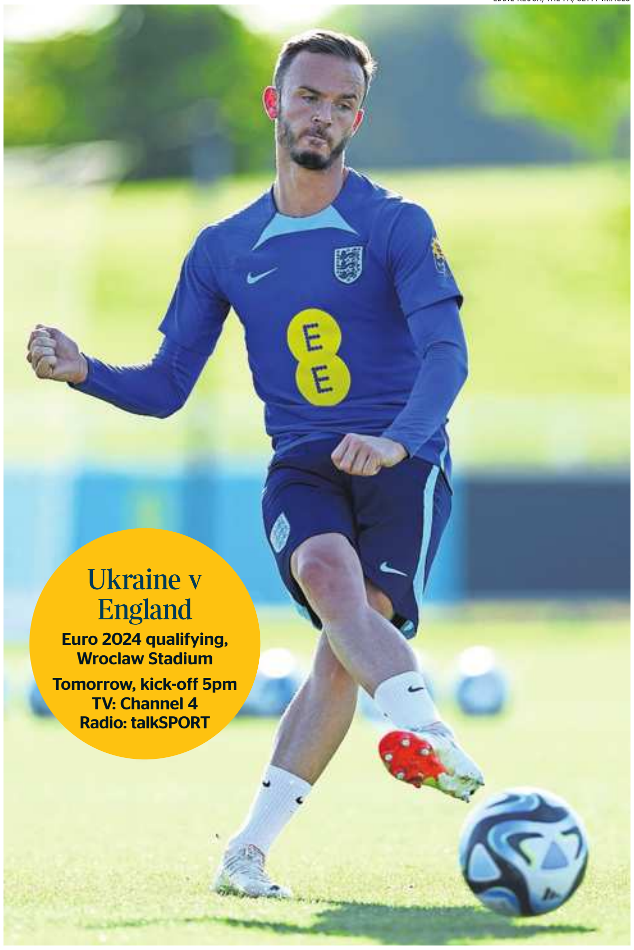
The FA had argued for the regulator to be part of the governing body, as had the Premier League, but ministers have outlined plans that would mean it is separate from any organisation already connected to the game — "To make sure it is operationally independent and can adequately protect clubs' and fans' interests", a government statement said.

A commitment for legislation for the regulator is now expected to be included in the King's Speech in November, with it becoming law next year.

The new regulator will aim to ensure that clubs are financially sustainable and will operate a licensing system under which it would be able to withdraw a licence from a club that it deemed to be at risk of insolvency. It would also oversee the owners' and directors' test. The government has made clear that the regulator will not impose any sporting sanctions.

'Dad's clips of Gazza are why I play to crowd'

James Maddison talks to **Henry Winter** about taking Harry Kane's No 10 shirt at Spurs and being the 'main man'



EDDIE KEOGH/THE FA/GETTY IMAGES

Maddison missed out on the Qatar World Cup after suffering a knee injury but is back with the England side after an impressive start to the season for Tottenham

An audience with James Maddison is always entertaining and enlightening. Holding court after England training at St George's Park, Maddison spoke about why as a "showman" he was a perfect fit for Tottenham Hotspur, of drawing inspiration from the Paul Gascoigne video compilations his father made for him, and why he wanted Harry Kane's No 10 shirt when the forward left Spurs.

Maddison is invariably worth listening to, particularly when he turns serious and highlights the work he does out of possession. We know Maddison the creator, providing two assists on his Spurs debut, against Brentford. We know Maddison the scorer, striking for Ange Postecoglou's side against Bournemouth and Burnley. But in this demanding modern game, playmakers and chance-takers are expected to contribute to regaining possession.

"The gaffer wants to press high and I've been pushing up with the striker, whoever's played as the No 9 — Richarlison in the first couple of games and then Sonny [Son Heung-min] against Burnley," Maddison says. "The gaffer's been really happy with my out-of-possession work. I hate sometimes there's a bit of a misconception that I don't work hard. I'm as hard-working as anyone.

"He says, 'What's the point in not pressing high and sitting off? Then if they play long you have to run back anyway.' So it's the same amount of running but you might win the ball. The perfect example of it was my goal [at Turf Moor in Tottenham's 5-2 win]. We were pressing high and our full back [Destiny Udogie] wins it in the front third, plays it to me inside and I get a shooting opportunity from the edge of the box instead of having to be defending back there."

Tottenham's creator

Maddison is excelling in attacking categories in the Premier League this season

Most passes into opponent's penalty area

Player	
James Maddison (Tottenham)	53
Enzo Fernandez (Chelsea)	47
Bruno Fernandes (Man Utd)	46
Ashley Young (Everton)	45
Pedro Neto (Wolves)	40

Expected assists*

Player	
Fernandes (Man Utd)	1.89
Kaoru Mitoma (Brighton)	1.83
Maddison (Tottenham)	1.81
Bukayo Saka (Arsenal)	1.61
Ben Chilwell (Chelsea)	1.41

*This measures the likelihood of a pass becoming a goal assist

Maddison has been at Spurs for only 70 days, and 347 minutes' playing time, since leaving Leicester City but he already looks a perfect fit, especially for Postecoglou. "He likes players who can take the ball and be brave," he says. "Bravery is not always just flying into a tackle. Bravery is having the balls to take the ball and if you give it away, go and take it again — that's bravery."

The 26-year-old was aware of the club's long love affair with entertainers. "That was one of the reasons I wanted to go to Tottenham," he says. "I could just see myself in that team, that kit, that stadium. It's a brilliant club and the supporters have made me feel so welcome and loved already.

"They've always had that type of player. My dad's favourite player when I was growing up was Gazza. My dad used to put football videos together. He's a graphic designer and he used to make montages. Gazza features in a lot of them. I remember a clip where the cameras are going down the [line at the] national anthem [at Italia '90] and it gets to him and he sticks his tongue out and starts messing around with the camera and going all bog-eyed. I just love that. That's why I like interacting with fans and showing my personality.

"I don't know if you saw the clip of me moving the ball out from the corner [quadrant] with the Bournemouth fans [to wind them up]. That keeps me hungry. I like the theatre element of almost being the villain a little bit."

His father posted videos on YouTube of the young Maddison playing and entertaining. "They're quite good videos. One was called 'A Decade of Development' from when I was a kid at Coventry, from my first trial to when I left the club. It's different when you get to the Premier League, there are copyrights. It isn't just his phone-recorded ones!

"I'm not trying to be the showman. That's just how I am as a person. I like to be the main man. I loved Philippe Coutinho at Liverpool and David Silva at [Manchester] City. Christian Eriksen when he first came to Spurs. I used to love Wazza [Wayne Rooney]. He was a bit more feisty than me but his personality came through in the way he played."

At Spurs, Maddison has taken Kane's old shirt after the centre forward left for Bayern Munich. "I didn't want the No 10 to become free, because that meant one thing," he says. "I didn't want Harry to leave but when he did and the club asked me [to take the shirt], then of course I wanted to wear it. It's my favourite number. I've got it tattooed. Listen, Harry's the best No 9 in the world and I'd have loved to have played with him for more than a couple of preseason games.

"Harry's probably the best player to ever play for Tottenham. He had nothing left to prove. I knew there was a chance Harry could leave but it wasn't all doom and gloom. There was such a good feel with the new manager coming in and new players."

He is now reunited with Kane as England prepare for tomorrow's Euro 2024 qualifier against Ukraine and Tuesday's Heritage match at Hampden Park. He desperately wants to make his mark with England, having made only three appearances in four years.

"I've been ready for a long time, in my head," he says, knowing the depth of creative alternatives that Gareth Southgate can call upon. "There is so much talent here. A lot of other people said it to me, 'Has Gareth got something against you?', because I had a little period out of the squad. But I probably wasn't playing well enough."

There was a perception of Maddison as occasionally unprofessional, enjoying socialising. "That's more a perception from the outside rather than people within," he says. "Listen, it's important you have a social life. I'm not going to sit in my room and go to bed at 8pm. I'm a social guy." But he emphasises his dedication and, sitting there at St George's Park, his lean, 72kg frame highlights his commitment. "We're all professional athletes at the top end of the game — if you don't look after yourself you get found out pretty quickly."

Southgate did pick him for the World Cup in Qatar but Maddison did not feature after injuring his knee on the eve of the tournament. "I remember being in my room after I got my knock against West Ham and thinking, 'Why now?'

"A younger version of myself would have been a bit more sulky, a bit more moody, a bit more moany. But I thought, 'You know what, I'm at the World Cup for my country.' I loved being part of it."

Guéhi set to replace Stones

Marc Guéhi is hoping to further underline his England credentials in tomorrow's European Championship qualifier against Ukraine (Paul Joyce writes).

The Crystal Palace centre back could start in the absence of the injured John Stones, which might mean that the 23-year-old reprises his partnership with Harry Maguire.

Gareth Southgate used the Guéhi-Maguire axis in June's 4-0 win over Malta. Maguire appeared for the first time this season as a substitute in Manchester United's loss to Arsenal last Sunday. The other options at centre back are Levi Colwill, Lewis Dunk and Fikayo Tomori.

Southgate has built culture that makes his camps unmissable

Paul Joyce

One of Gareth Southgate's first experiences as England manager proved to be a sobering one. His maiden squad announcement in October 2016 for the games against Malta and Slovenia served as a proud moment, though the problems would quickly pile up.

Raheem Sterling, Glen Johnson and Phil Jagielka all withdrew from that initial party and finding replacements proved an eye-opener for Southgate who, at that point, was only in place in a caretaker role.

"The first camp I took, I can remember phoning three players to call them up, because three had pulled out, and none of them wanted to come," he revealed in the book *England Football: The Biography: 1872-2022*.

Southgate has never revealed the identity of the three players who turned their back on their country, nor is he ever likely to, yet it feels pertinent to revisit the story considering the lengths England players now go to be involved in the squad, rather than avoiding it.

Luke Shaw's presence at St George's Park this week was notable as he was not even included in the squad for the Euro 2024 qualifier with Ukraine tomorrow and next Tuesday's friendly with Scotland, having sustained a muscular injury while playing for Manchester United last month.

Yet the left back opted to continue his rehabilitation under the guidance of England's medical team, reporting on Monday before leaving the camp on Wednesday, which allowed him to take part in team meetings and listen to presentations from Southgate and his coaching staff — especially crucial in a season which ends with a tournament: Euro 2024.



United's Shaw chose to continue his recovery with England's medical team

That Shaw, 28, should make that commitment serves as a neat contrast to how he once viewed his England career. He admitted in March 2021 to having "massive regrets" about pulling out of squads, and the manner in which he did so, because he was not in the right condition. He confessed to feeling like "letting down" Southgate.

In addition to Shaw, Trent Alexander-Arnold also spent Monday evening with the squad before returning to Liverpool on Tuesday to begin treatment on the hamstring he tweaked in the 3-0 victory over Aston Villa last Sunday.

The timing of an injury that will keep him out for three weeks represented an unfortunate setback for Alexander-Arnold given how well Southgate's experiment of using the 24-year-old as a midfielder had gone in June's international matches. Alexander-Arnold is determined to try to forge a successful England career after some false starts. His decision to stay with the team serves as a reflection of that as he, too, listened to what Southgate wants from his squad.

It was, not for the first time, Jude Bellingham who set the standard. The midfielder was nursing a knee injury in June after a demanding campaign and about to seal his £88 million transfer from Borussia Dortmund to Real Madrid, but still chose to report to St George's Park in the build-up to what was, ironically, another game against Malta.

The transformation owes much to the culture that Southgate has nurtured after being confronted with all that cynicism and scepticism almost seven years ago. The attitude of this group has, by and large, also been key and there seems to be a collective willingness to earn the best possible chance to ensure recent tournament near-misses ultimately prove a springboard to success.

Matt Dickinson

Senior Sports Writer



Cipriani just can't see that he may be the problem

YUI MOK/PA



Cipriani leaves court in 2018, having pleaded guilty to common assault and resisting arrest on a night out. Such incidents undermine his claims that he was merely a victim of English rugby's conservatism

Danny Cipriani's forthcoming memoir is, in part, a hair-raising romp through sex, drugs, car crashes (literal and metaphorical) and plenty more sex. It is also, in more sober passages, a painful struggle with rejection and belonging.

But, perhaps above all, it is a philosophical drawing of battle lines. Cavalier or Roundhead? Rule-breaking or rulebook? Is Cipriani the problem or all those English rugby coaches who, in his telling, did not know what to do with his genius? Are you on the side of this champion of ball-playing spontaneity or do you think that he brought all the trouble on himself?

Long after Cipriani's chance has gone, it still feels timely to have the discussion as England enter a World Cup with Steve Borthwick accused of typifying English rugby's lack of imagination.

It is a current and compelling debate which is why — aside from tales of nights with Kelly Brook and Lindsay Lohan, or digs at Eddie Jones — Cipriani's autobiography has already had remarkable exposure for a player with 16 caps and 64 international points.

Maverick talent and flawed genius intrigue — more than straightforward heroes or villains — because they throw up irresolvable, polarised debates. There are endless "what ifs" on to which we can project all of our hopes or frustrations.

We should talk about this. Just having read his book, I am still not convinced that Cipriani is the best person to lead the argument on behalf of the nonconformist, creative tendency.

There is a case to be made about English rugby's need for a cultural shift and Cipriani lines up some powerful voices on his own side including Shaun Edwards, Jonny Wilkinson and Brian Ashton. But would the argument not be far stronger coming from someone who did not do so much to undermine his own qualities?

Is it best from a player who, with a need to show English rugby all it was missing, flew to the other side of the world and descended into self-destruction?

"My first night out in Melbourne, I'm offered cocaine," Cipriani writes of going to Australia in 2010 in response to his exile from Martin Johnson's England. He takes the drug, and then sleeping pills, and we are quickly veering down a path of mayhem by any standards, never mind a professional athlete. Cipriani is a young man struggling to make sense of his life, blown even further off course by spells of depression, but the question of how much he was failed by others — by coaches, directors and the game itself — is worth examining in a little depth.

When Cipriani falls asleep at the wheel driving into training after another bender and rolls into a car, he has a go at the Melbourne club for telling him that he is being axed from a tour to South Africa: "No one higher up says, 'Danny, what's going on? Are you OK, mate? Is there anything we can do to help?' Instead, it's, 'Mate, not again. Here's your punishment.' "

That was not what I understood from chatting to Gary Gray, a Melbourne Rebels director, when I wrote a long piece about Cipriani in an attempt to understand where and why it went wrong for this prodigious talent.

Gray says he spent a lot of time trying to make the move work, taking Cipriani out for meals and chats which were intimate enough to have heard about the player's father abandoning him as a child and his mother struggling to give him the attention he craved.

According to Gray, he liked Cipriani, felt for him and tried to make allowances. But there had to be limits. "This is not to be cruel but a lot of people gave him chances and chances and chances," Gray told me. "But the saddest part is that, if it was another week, month or even the next day, it felt like he spat in your face. That's emotive, not quite what I mean, but he f***ed up again." As Gray concluded in a phrase that stuck most of all: "He just seemed to be a serial f***er-upper."

Or as Cipriani acknowledges at one point: "I gave people too many excuses to write me off as a bit of a dickhead."

There is honesty in that admission and the book is not short of soul-searching. But despite Cipriani's insistence that he has cast off victimhood to take wider responsibility for his life and, ultimately, find peace, there is no avoiding his belief that the greatest failing of his career lies with others — a victim of English rugby's inability to embrace flair.

Cipriani imagines other walks of life where his special talent would have thrived, like as a movie star telling Martin Scorsese he is changing the script. "You know what, Marty? I reckon I should be saying this instead," he writes.

Talented enough to be offered a chance with Chelsea as a kid and to train with Milton Keynes Dons as an adult, he thinks it could have been different with a round ball. "It's not so much that I prefer the people, more that I feel less constricted," he notes.

Then there is basketball. Cipriani becomes mates with Blake Griffin, a six-times NBA All-Star, who tells him that he would have been allowed to challenge coaches and flourish freely in that competition.

Is rugby really so singularly out of tune? After Edwards and Ashton did not work with him beyond 23, it is Cipriani's lot to be stuck with so many coaches who fail him. That group includes Rod Macqueen, the World Cup-winning coach with Australia, and Ian McGeechan, the British & Irish Lions legend.

Like a rugby-playing Goldilocks who can never find the right one — each coach is too this or too that — Cipriani is incessantly pointing out where they are wrong and how he sees the game on a different plane.

He writes that his working-class background gives him a more elastic, creative mind than conformist middle-class team-mates slavishly following orders. "I was targeted and ostracised because I felt differently and thought differently to most coaches," he says.

No doubt some did not fully harness his undoubted gifts, but I wonder how much time Cipriani has spent imagining what it was like for those coaches dealing with 20 or 30 players with all their individual issues on top of all the other demands of managing a team.

The most regular theme from speaking to people about Cipriani was how handling this one star player became a time-consuming exercise; meetings after meetings to talk about Danny. People wanting to help, seduced by the man and his talent, only to feel let down in the end.

"Still not playing the game by anyone else's rules," is how Cipriani concludes his book, proudly.

But perhaps if he had tried to, things might have turned out more successfully for him and the English game.

● Who Am I? *by Danny Cipriani is published by HarperCollins on September 14.*

Wales held by South Korea

Football
Hamzah Khalique-Loonat

Rob Page's admission that he would rather not have played last night's friendly against South Korea, with all attention on the European qualifier with Latvia on Monday, formed the backdrop to an uninspiring goalless draw.

Wales displayed some early energy in front of 13,668 fans in Cardiff as Harry Wilson broke in the 13th minute and forced Kim Seung-gyu to save. While Korea had the majority of possession, Wales defended diligently enough, but lacked leadership until Aaron Ramsey's introduction on the hour.

Chances then flowed, the best of which fell to Kieffer Moore. Chris Mepham's stood-up cross found the forward, whose header struck the woodwork, and then bounced off Ramsey, who was too close to react.

Page, the Wales manager, will have learnt little but the match confirmed one thing: if Wales are to beat Latvia, and have any hope of qualifying, Ramsey will need to take responsibility.

Ireland outclassed in Paris

Euro 2024 qualifying
Paul Rowan

France reminded everybody of their class with a comfortable 2-0 victory over Ireland at Parc des Princes in European Championship qualifying last night. The gulf between the sides was enormous and Stephen Kenny's team did well to concede only two, with Aurélien Tchouaméni scoring a belter in the first half and Marcus Thuram, on as a substitute, scoring his first international goal shortly after the break.

With France predictably dominating possession, the breakthrough arrived in the 19th minute. Kylian Mbappé teed up Tchouaméni in plenty of space. The Real Madrid midfielder's curling shot from a wide angle outside the box flew past goalkeeper Gavin Bazunu.

Ireland had plenty of close scrapes before the break, with Thuram offside when he played in Mbappé to score, but any hope of an Irish revival was dashed when Mbappé had a couple of chances blocked and Thuram pounced on the loose ball and scooped it into the net.

CONTINUED FROM BACK

Antony faces fresh assault claim

the club will be making no further comments. As a club we are taking this matter seriously, with consideration of the impact these allegations … will have on survivors of abuse."

Antony has said on social media: "I can calmly state that the accusations are false and that the evidence already produced and the other evidence that will be produced demonstrate that I am innocent of the accusations made."

Antony added that his relationship with his former partner was "tumultuous" but insisted that he had "never committed any physical aggression".

Faletau returns for Fiji opener but Lake is forced to wait

Elgan Alderman Bordeaux

Taulupe Faletau will start at No 8 for Wales against Fiji on Sunday alongside Jac Morgan, who will lead the team from open-side flanker. There is no place in the match-day 23 for Dewi Lake, the squad's co-captain, who has been recovering from a knee injury suffered at Twickenham four weeks ago.

Lake, whose audition as captain in that defeat by England did not last 30 minutes before he departed, feared he would not make the World Cup at all. He was fit enough to share leadership duties with Morgan but he is not ready to play, having been practising his line-out throwing while the rest of the squad warmed up on Wednesday evening. Tommy Reffell was absent from that session after taking a bang to the knee, but he has been named on the bench.

"He's not had as much training under his belt as the other hookers since he picked up that knock to his knee, so Ryan Elias and Elliot Dee are selected," Warren Gatland, the head coach, said of Lake, 24. Elias, who was also a doubt after he was injured in the opening minutes of the summer series, wears No 2.

The starting XV have 832 caps between them, with three players — Dan Biggar, George North and Faletau — on 100 or more apiece. Ten players are set to make their first World Cup appearance: five from the outset, five off the bench. Faletau wins his first cap since the Six Nations, having missed the summer series because of a calf injury. Such is the 32-year-old's experience at No 8 that Gatland had no qualms about picking him. Aaron Wainwright completes the back-row trio. Gareth Davies starts a third successive World Cup as Wales's scrum half in a familiar half-back partnership with Biggar. This is only Davies's third start since the 2021 Six Nations, and he did not feature at all last season, but with Gatland back at the helm Davies has been restored at No 9.

It is a jersey in which he has excelled at this tournament: he scored five tries in 2015, including his famous score en route to knocking out England, and his interception helped defeat Australia in the pool stage four years ago. That play was a distinctive part of Davies's game — coming from deep and blitzing near a ruck, looking to pick off a pass — but under Wayne Pivac and Gethin Jenkins, the former head and defence coaches respectively, he was told to alter his style, leading to a loss of form and enjoyment. With the return of Gatland in December after Pivac was sacked, Davies, 33, rediscovered his form and returned to the squad.

"Twelve months ago I probably wouldn't have thought I would be involved in the first game of a World Cup but anything can happen in rugby," Davies said. "Things have happened and I have worked extremely hard to work myself into contention and hopefully I can show that."

Nick Tompkins and North will pair up in the centre for the seventh time in internationals. Liam Williams is at full back and there is no place for Leigh Halfpenny in the 23.

Louis Rees-Zammit and Josh Adams, the leading tryscorer at the 2019 tournament, are on the wings, with Rio Dyer on the bench. Tomos Williams and Sam Costelow are the replacement half backs. Gareth Thomas and Tomas Francis are the starting props, and Will Rowlands and Adam Beard form the second row.

Wales v Fiji
Stade de Bordeaux
Sunday, kick-off 8pm
TV: ITV1, 7.15pm
Radio: BBC 5 Live

Wales L Williams; L Rees-Zammit, G North, N Tompkins, J Adams; D Biggar, G Davies; G Thomas, R Elias, T Francis, W Rowlands, A Beard, A Wainwright, J Morgan (c), T Faletau. **Replacements** E Dee, C Domachowski, D Lewis, D Jenkins, T Reffell, T Williams, S Costelow, R Dyer.

How defeat in 2007 brought Welsh revamp

Steve James



The Wales team bus arrived at the Vale Resort hotel outside Cardiff and slowed to a stop. Suddenly Gareth Jenkins stood up and muttered a brief goodbye, getting off the bus and making a hurried escape down a back lane to the car park rather than taking the usual route alongside the golf course in the picturesque setting that has long been Wales's training base.

Jenkins towed his suitcase with one hand and in the other carried his duty free in a plastic bag. "He looked smaller, less commanding, like the whole experience had robbed him of his vitality," Adam Jones, the prop, wrote in his autobiography.

Jenkins had been sacked as Wales head coach that morning before the team flew back to Cardiff. Quite naturally, he wanted to avoid the media. This was 2007 and Wales had just been knocked out at the pool stage of the World Cup in France by Fiji, the shock defeat in Nantes spelling the end for Jenkins, whose torrid 18-month tenure had been conducted to the defiant soundtrack of "Judge me on the World Cup." The 38-34 defeat, along with Fiji's recent 30-22 victory over England at Twickenham, acts as a stark warning to Wales as they prepare to start this World Cup in Bordeaux on Sunday against the same opponents.

Immediately after the game, there had been a meeting near the halfway line of the Nantes pitch between the Welsh Rugby Union (WRU) chairman David Pickering, chief executive Roger Lewis and head of communications John Williams. Everybody knew the topic of their conversation.

An emergency board meeting took place within the next hour at the ground. There were 14 members of the board present at the match and they decided by 13 to one that Jenkins had to go. He was informed of the decision the next morning at the team hotel.

"It was incredibly harsh," Tom Shanklin, the centre, says. "I was sad, really sad. Gareth had done so much for Welsh rugby as a player and a coach at Scarlets. He came into the Wales set-up. It didn't work, but you shouldn't be treated like that. There is a way of doing things. That was a poor judgment by Roger Lewis. It was the right decision, unfortunately, because it is a results business, but it was really poorly managed."

Jenkins was 54 when appointed in 2006 and was undoubtedly out of the old school, a flanker who made his Llanelli debut as a 17-year-old, with more than 250 appearances for the club, including in the famous victory over New Zealand in 1972, and who toured Japan with Wales in 1975 but was not capped.

As a passionate and emotional coach, he was a serial winner with Llanelli and the Scarlets region that was formed in 2003. But the Wales job certainly came too late for Jenkins, who had been overlooked in 2004 when Mike Ruddock was appointed to replace Steve Hansen. Jenkins won only six of his 20 matches and allowed the players a little too loose a rein off the field. The week before the Fiji match they had enjoyed a boozy day and night in Paris, spending the day at the races at Longchamp.

I ask Shanklin what he remembers of that Fiji match and he merely says with a chuckle: "It was a beautiful day." It was, weather-wise, and it was actually a wonderful match to watch, almost like sevens at times, as Wales got dragged into the fast-and-loose game in which the Fijians have always revelled.

"They wanted a loose game, but so did we in a way," Shanklin says. "We wanted to play with width and to our strengths. We had a brilliant back three. I remember thinking when Martyn Williams got the intercept try [to make it 34-31 with five minutes remaining], 'Here we go, the floodgates are opened,' but they just came back and they didn't go away. Back then teams like Fiji and Italy put up a good fight for 40 or 50 minutes and then eventually folded, whether it was fitness or lack of a game plan — [but] they didn't that time, they just kept coming back."

Wales were undoubtedly complacent. On the morning of the Fiji match, the team had even been informed of their travel plans for a quarter-final against South Africa in Marseille the following week.

"We weren't that nervous," Shanklin says. "It was Fiji. We knew they were a pretty decent team but we all expected to win. They didn't carry the weight that they do now. They were a team full of individuals. We were just treating it as another game we were certain we would win."

It was also a big game for the captain Gareth Thomas. It was his 100th cap. He had had some boots specially made for the occasion.

"He was giving a team talk and we were expecting something big, inspirational and profound," Shanklin says. "And he says, 'Everyone look at my boots, they're lush!' He went on to deliver a speech, but you look back and there were just little things that you start to remember."

Defensively, Wales were all at sea. Their reserves had been scything them apart all week in training and now it was Fiji's turn to do so.

"Rowland Phillips was trying to teach us the blitz defence, which is why we were probably a bit disorganised; it was a new system to us," Shanklin says. "It was only really South Africa that were employing it. We didn't have enough time to learn and understand it."

The upshot of all this was that, from a shortlist that included Hansen, Ian Foster, Robbie Deans and Jake White, Warren Gatland was appointed as head coach and a period of sustained success followed. Gatland brought the structure and clarity required for a talented group of players.

Although there was a 16-16 draw between the two sides in Cardiff in the autumn of 2010, after which Gatland relieved Ryan Jones of the captaincy, the next time Wales played Fiji at a World Cup, in 2011, they won 66-0.

Wales beat Fiji again in 2015 — only five days after Wales' stunning victory over England at Twickenham — and prevailed in 2019 too, but this feels ominously like 2007.

Gatland has already referenced how hard playing the Fijians in their opening game was for Australia in 2019. Australia won 39-21 but Fiji were leading 21-15 as the game approached the hour. Gatland was at Twickenham for the recent win over England too, so he is well aware of the danger.

Fiji, ranked No 7 in the world, have had five warm-up games, defeating Tonga, Samoa and Japan, as well as England, and pushing France hard in a 34-17 loss. A repeat of the 2007 result would not be a shock this time.

MIKE EGERTON/PA



Akapusi Qera evades the grasp of Wales's Matthew Rees as he goes over to score in Fiji's shock win at the 2007 World Cup

Match details

Wales 34: Tries A Popham, S Williams, G Thomas, M Jones, M Williams. **Conversions** J Hook, S Jones (2). **Penalty** S Jones.

Fiji 38: Tries A Qera, V Delasau, K Leawere, G Dewes. **Conversions** N Little (3). **Penalties** Little (4).

HT 25-10.

Attendance 37,080.
(At Stade de la Beaujoire, Nantes)

Limelight holds no fear for

Fabien Galthié's side are unfazed by the huge expectations as they bid to make history, writes **Alex Lowe** in Paris

The workmen applying the finishing touches to the grounds outside the Stade de France, hastily laying concrete and erecting marquees, seemed to be going about their work with a far greater degree of stress than the men inside. Antoine Dupont led France through a gentle final training run before the curtain rises on the Rugby World Cup. The showmen are ready for opening night.

World Rugby proposed that the tournament open with France against New Zealand. Les Bleus could have pushed for a softer fixture to ease their players into the tournament, given the sky-high expectation levels across France and the importance of a first win to give the tournament lift-off. But Fabien Galthié, the head coach, had no qualms about playing the All Blacks first in pool A.

With Dupont as their poster boy, this is a young team who relish the pressure, who see it not as a burden to be carried but as a source of inspiration, which is a rare and precious psychological space to occupy.

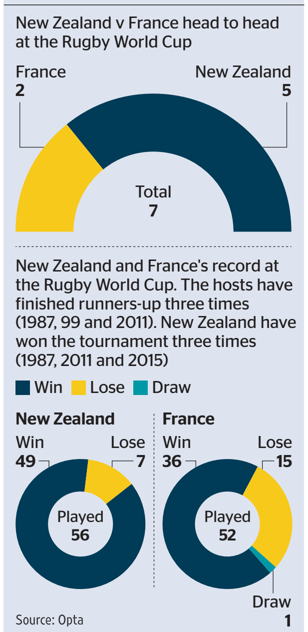
France are undefeated at home in two years, during which time they have delivered statement victories over New Zealand, South Africa, Ireland, and, in March 2022, against England. Although *Les Rosbifs* were the weakest of those opponents, the occasion was the biggest, the pressure the greatest: a chance for France to win a first Six Nations grand slam in 12 years and to maintain a tradition of never having lost such a game on home soil.

There were early signs of nerves that night, a couple of dropped passes that kept England in the game for longer than they deserved before France, who absolutely bossed the breakdown, regained their composure and closed out a victory way more comfortable than the final scoreline of 25-13 suggested. At which point, a party erupted inside the Stade de France.

That experience was hugely important for France in their growth towards this World Cup, given they had blown potential Six Nations titles in 2020 and 2021. Their reaction was emphatic, defeating the All Blacks 40-25 in November 2021 with a performance which had a jaded French public swooning.

The supporters had been put through the mill over the previous decade. Two years after losing the 2011 World Cup final to New Zealand, France finished last in the Six Nations. They then failed

How the teams compare



to progress beyond the quarter-finals at either the 2015 or 2019 World Cups, with the game in France divided by club-country politics and rancour.

But the grand slam against England, on the back of that New Zealand win in November 2021, confirmed that it was OK for French fans to drop their barriers and fall in love with this team. Dupont understands that.

"We all have a responsibility to do something great at this World Cup," Dupont said. "I'm captain, so I'm perhaps more in the limelight than the others, but we all want to write our names into the tournament's record books, something no French side has managed to do.

"There's pressure because we're expected to do well. We have built up people's hopes over the last four seasons with the results we've had. Everyone wants to see us become champions and they believe in us. But the pressure isn't as high as the motivation and standards we set ourselves — or our ambition.

"We need to take the good pressure. We want to play. We are so happy to play, to live the moment with desire, with patience and to love each other very much.

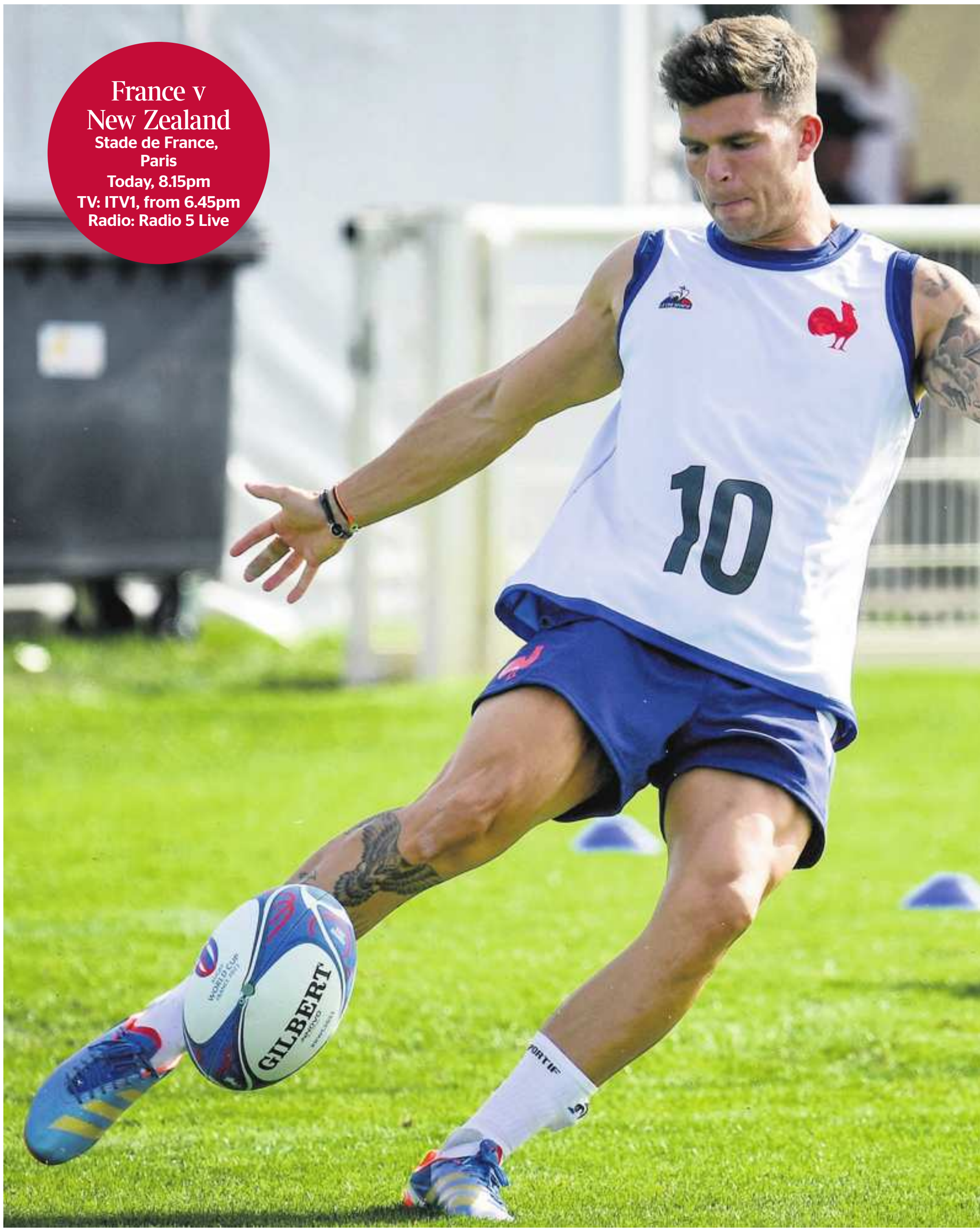
"We don't have any weight. We don't carry a burden on our back. We are light. We are happy to play and to be ready for New Zealand."

There is a rich history of World Cup matches between these sides, including the finals in 1987 and 2011 plus France's epic semi-final win in 1999 and shock quarter-final triumph in 2007. "We can talk about all these games from the history of our sport but they are not relevant tomorrow," Raphaël Ibañez, the France team manager, said yesterday.

"History is there to be written for this generation."

Tonight is just the first chapter. This game is a zinger but it will not decide the World Cup. Both sides will progress and the results in pool B will determine which of South Africa, Ireland or Scotland they face in the quarter-finals.

So there will definitely be bigger games to come, which was why France chose not to risk Jonathan Danty's troublesome hamstring. A genuine,



'Big man' McCarthy adds weight to beefy Ireland pack in dry run for Paris

Peter O'Reilly Bordeaux

Four years ago at the World Cup in Japan, Ireland discovered the danger of looking too far ahead. When Joe Schmidt rested Johnny Sexton for a relatively harmless-looking pool game against the host nation, he did so to keep his playmaker fit for a probable quarter-final against South Africa. But then Ireland lost to Japan and Schmidt's plans were in shreds.

No one is suggesting that Andy Farrell's side will suffer a shock upset against Romania in Bordeaux tomorrow. Romania are 18 places below Ireland in the world rankings and have recently suffered 50-point defeats by Italy and Georgia.

But Ireland's selection for tomorrow suggests that the Springboks are once again in their eyeline and that Farrell is fixated with finding a way to combat their awesome size and power when the teams collide at the Stade de France in just over two weeks' time.

The head coach has assembled probably his beefiest available set of forwards, surely as a dry run for St Denis. Tadhg Beirne moves from lock to blindside flanker, while Peter O'Mahony will wear the No 7 jersey for only the seventh time in a 97-cap career, thus relegating world player of the year Josh van der Flier to the bench.

The most eye-catching pick, however, is that of 22-year-old Leinster lock Joe McCarthy, who has only three caps but the sort of physical presence that excites Farrell and especially his forwards coach Paul O'Connell.

McCarthy stands at 6ft 6in, a couple of inches below Springbok behemoths like Eben Etzebeth and RG Snyman, but he weighs in at just under 19st. He can also put that weight to good effect



At 6ft 6in, McCarthy has the kind of physical presence that excites his coaches in the Ireland set-up

nerveless France



ABDULLAH FIRAS/ABACA/SHUTTERSTOCK

Jalibert gets his eye in, left; Retallick and Smith, right, enjoy some down time; Foster, below, plays it cool

game-changing, world-class talent; save him for when it really matters.

France are also without Romain Ntamack, Cyril Baille and Paul Willemse but they can absorb those absences better than New Zealand, who are missing Brodie Retallick, Tyrel Lomax, Shannon Frizell and Jordie Barrett. The irony, given the way France have played in previous generations, is that we do not know which New Zealand team will turn up.

This year they have smashed South Africa physically, at least for the first half-hour of their Rugby Championship fixture, but also taken a fearful pounding from the Springboks. With Jaco Peyper as referee, the contact area could be a free-for-all, which should be to France's benefit.

Ian Foster, who was one game away from being sacked last year, was also trying to play it cool yesterday, sliding on his shades in the press conference. "Fabien looks good in his glasses too," Foster, the New Zealand head coach, quipped. While France were distancing themselves from World Cups past, the All Blacks felt it was important to retain a connection.

They have won it three times, but two of those triumphs were on home soil. "The All Blacks have shown you don't just turn up and get what you want," he said. "We represent those teams in a way because we have learnt some lessons.

"You look at the performances against South Africa, Australia, suddenly we are World Cup favourites. Then it got a bit brutal at Twickenham [a 35-7 defeat by the Springboks last month] and suddenly we're the worst All Blacks team ever.

"We've had a smile about that, and we're quite excited about it. Expectation is no stranger to the All Blacks. We want to walk out on that stage with shiny eyes, nice and light.

"France is very much a rugby country and I think this is one of best stadiums in the world. Their ability to create an occasion is pretty special. Turn up tomorrow night and I think you'll feel that."

How they line up

France		New Zealand
T Ramos	15	B Barrett
D Penaud	14	W Jordan
G Fickou	13	R Ioane
Y Moefana	12	A Lienert-Brown
G Villière	11	M Telea
M Jalibert	10	R Mo'unga
A Dupont (c)	9	A Smith
R Wardi	1	E De Groot
J Marchand	2	C Taylor
U Atonio	3	N Laulala
C Woki	4	S Whitelock
T Flament	5	S Barrett
F Cros	6	D Papali'i
C Ollivon	7	S Cane (c)
G Alldritt	8	A Savea

Replacements	**Replacements**
P Mauvaka	S Taukei'aho
J-B Gros	F Newell
D Aldegheri	O Tu'ungafasi
R Taofifenua	T Vaa'i
P Boudehent	L Jacobson
M Lucu	F Christie
A Vincent	D Havili
M Jaminet	L Fainga'anuku

Referee J Peyper (SA) **Assistant** K Dickson (Eng) and C Ridley (Eng) **TMO** T Foley (Eng)

— in the scrum, at the maul and in every collision.

"The big thing with Joe is his power and size," Rob Herring, the hooker, said. "Having him scrumming behind you is unbelievable. For a young guy he's really honed his craft at scrum time and he's consistently delivering massive work behind us.

"So I'm excited, and all the front-rowers are excited, to have him behind us. Just his athleticism around the park as well. He makes big moments with his carries and I think for a guy his age he's a very mature player."

Tadhg Furlong was a little more restrained in his praise, perhaps wary of "bigging up" a youngster who looks a little wide-eyed to be taking part in his first major tournament. But his message was basically the same as Herring's. "Joe is a big man," Furlong said. "He's well put together. He's strong, he likes his scrum. He's a good young fella, he wants to learn, he wants to listen and it's been great working with him."

While this looks close to Ireland's strongest side, Mack Hansen is not in the 23, despite being fit. The expectation is that Farrell will dip further into his squad against Tonga next week, though Dan Sheehan is not expected to be fit until the South Africa week.

Sexton, the Ireland captain, plays his first game in six months on Saturday, having recovered from a groin injury and served his misconduct ban. The 38-year-old will surely feel the heat in Bordeaux — the mid-afternoon forecast is 34C. Sexton says heat is good for his groin, however, and for his place-kicking range.

"I built into it but over the last month or so," Sexton said. "I've been trying to do 'a little and often' really. I'm very happy with where I am going into the game."

Ireland v Romania, pool B
Tomorrow, kick-off 2.30pm **TV:** ITV1

Ireland H Keenan; K Earls, G Ringrose, B Aki, J Lowe; J Sexton (capt), J Gibson-Park; A Porter, Herring, T Furlong; J McCarthy, J Ryan; T Beirne, P O'Mahony, C Doris. **Replacements** R Kelleher, J Loughman, T O'Toole, I Henderson, J Van der Flier, C Murray, J Crowley, R Henshaw.
Romania M Simionescu; N Onutu, F Tangimana, J Tomane, T Manumua; H Vaovasa, G Rupanu; J Hartig, O Cojocaru, A Gordas; A Motoc, S Iancu; F Rosu, V Neculau, C Chirica (capt). **Replacements** F Bardasu, A Savin, G Gajion, M Iftimiciuc, D Ser, A Conache, T Boldor, T Gontineac.

The proud lineage of Pumas' No 2 – rugby's most fearsome shirt

Julián Montoya is only the latest in a string of world-class Argentina hookers in professional era, says **Elgan Alderman**

There is no doubting that Diego Cash was a warrior on a rugby field. When you search his name on Google, two pictures appear: in one he wears a blood-stained Argentina jersey, the claret starting at his nose, dribbling down, over his mouth; the other depicts less blood — still some, though, on his left cheek — and the older face of a man who knows every trick in the front row book, all the wisdom you would expect an Argentine front row to have.

Argentina's set-piece play of the past is legendary, with revered props such as Marcos Ayerza and Rodrigo Roncero at the forefront of the "Bajada", the scrummaging technique of pushing towards the hooker. "I remember Ayerza telling me that a lot of the Argentina scrum is based on what happens after the engagement," Dan Cole, the England prop, said. "He said, 'We come together as gentlemen,' and then he'd just lift you off your feet because he's really strong."

The Pumas who wear Nos 1 and 3 are not as petrifying as they once were, but the man between the loose head and tight head still is. The Argentine hooker is one of the great lineages of rugby's professional era: four men dating back almost 30 years, each a contender for the world's best during their time, uniting the forces on either side of the front line.

When England face Argentina tomorrow, Julián Montoya is set to captain the Pumas, winning his 90th cap at his third global tournament. Agustín Creevy is on the bench, potentially a 102nd cap — the only Argentinian in three figures — at a fourth World Cup. After making his debut in 2005 as a flanker, Creevy became the understudy to Mario Ledesma, who won 84 caps and played in four World Cups, following where Federico Méndez led.

They are familiar faces to English fans. Méndez had spells at Bath and Northampton Saints, while Ledesma featured in European competitions for Narbonne, Castres and Clermont-Auvergne. The recent crop have been commonplace in the Gallagher Premiership: Creevy, formerly of Worcester Warriors, was at London Irish with Ignacio Ruiz, the third-choice hooker at this World Cup, and will join Sale Sharks this season; Montoya is at Leicester Tigers, with whom he won the title last year under Steve Borthwick; and Santiago Socino, the third-choice hooker from the 2019 World Cup, is at Gloucester.

Méndez was typical of Argentine forwards of the Eighties and Nineties. Like Cash, he played prop and hooker internationally.

"The only thing I remember about that first game was how the time flashed by," Jason Leonard recalled in 2000 about his early experiences of facing Argentina. "And we won. The next week Argentina brought back Diego Cash, who was a very good player, as their tight head. I had all the cockiness knocked out of me and we lost. He was the first of many great players I've come up against."

Cash was Argentina's hooker at the 1987 World Cup, but lined up mostly at prop thereafter. In November 1990, Argentina came to Twickenham with Cash and an 18-year-old Méndez as their props, either side of Ricardo le Fort. Few will remember that England won 51-0 that day; everyone will recall that Méndez was shown a red card for punching Paul Ackford. "Jason [Leonard] dropped the scrummage and I booted Cash in the ribs as he was getting up," Ackford wrote in The Times of the build-up to the punch. "It was meant to be a stern, don't-mess-with-my-mate-sunshine sort of kick, but it should have been harder because Cash barely squeaked."

On that occasion, and at the 1991 World Cup, Argentina had three cycles of hooker in the same front row. By 1995, Méndez was the man in the No 2 jersey, and in that tournament Argentina's front row was regarded as the world's best.

Ledesma made his Argentina debut in 1996, winning the last of his 84 caps 15 years later. The early years were characterised by run-ins with rugby law: he was suspended for abusing a referee in Buenos Aires before the 1999 World Cup, returning just in time to take part, three years after he was sent off for fighting in a match between Argentina and South-West in Redruth. By 2011, Ledesma's last tournament, he was 38, a year older than Argentina's head coach — a role that Ledesma would fulfil eight years later. He oversaw Australia's forwards in 2015, and he would lie on his back under the opposing front rows while they scrummaged in training.

The transition from Ledesma to Creevy happened before our eyes at Eden Park, when one man replaced the other in Argentina's 2011 quarter-final defeat by New Zealand. Only two of Creevy's first 28 caps were as a starter, understudy first to Ledesma and briefly to Eusebio Guiñazú.

Creevy was dropped by Ledesma for Montoya after the first pool match in 2019. Now, with No 16 his more regular jersey, Creevy is the 38-year-old at a fourth World Cup. Montoya, 29, was Creevy's stand-in between 2014 and 2019, making only six starts in his first 56 appearances, but he is now the leader of his nation.

"He is in my top three players I've ever coached when it comes to dedication," Michael Cheika, the Argentina head coach, said.

Before the match against England four years ago, Creevy said it would be like a war. "When we put on this shirt we feel something different," he said of the Argentina jersey, regardless of what number is on the back. Particularly in that No 2 top, something special resides.



Montoya is set to win his 90th cap for Argentina

England can fight way out of

Alex Lowe



Rugby Correspondent, Paris

Steve Borthwick's message from Marseille began to sound like someone begging to be allowed back into the house after letting down their partner just one too many times.

"There's a feeling among the players that people have called time a bit too early on this squad," he said. "The players have a hell of a lot more to go." In other words: "Don't leave us, I promise we'll change."

But England are at the point now, after too many empty promises over a long period of decline (which pre-dates Borthwick), where actions speak louder than words.

England have won four times in 13 Tests over the past year, losing at home to Argentina for only the second time and to Fiji for the first time. They now head into a World Cup game against the Pumas as underdogs.

No wonder people have been losing faith.

Results would be a good way to start rekindling the romance — decent performances too. If England can produce both of those tomorrow, then let's talk.

But Borthwick kept going, speaking passionately, his voice louder and more authoritative than usual. "I have an expectation that these players will go and perform with the quality that they have," he said. "We all want to help these players achieve their dreams on the biggest of stages. The players can't wait to get stuck in."

In the other room, Tom Curry was fizzing with energy as he spoke about the prospect of playing for the first time since the Gallagher Premiership final. How England have missed him this year. "The emotion is huge," he said. "The first game in a World Cup. We're an extremely passionate England team."

Maybe then, just maybe, England will not let you down this time.

So do you hold off changing the locks and give them one more chance?

After all, England know they have to be good to their word. Just look at that Pumas team, which comes with six forwards and two backs on the bench. Pablo Matera. Marcos Kremer. Martín González. Julián Montoya. Emiliano Boffelli. Mateo Carreras. Santiago Carreras.

A ferocious and uncompromising forward pack and an electric back division. None of England's best performers from the November defeat are playing.

But central to Borthwick's plea to keep the faith was Manu Tuilagi, a man who has defied even his own expectations to be playing at this World Cup.

Four years ago, in the build-up to England's pool win against Argentina, Tuilagi, 32, said there was no way he could see himself playing at this World Cup.

"I'll be too old," he said in Tokyo. "I already feel it. I know that it is not going to last for ever, that it is not going to last very long, so I have got to enjoy the moment while it is here."

And yet there he is, named at inside centre to play the Pumas. Borthwick sees Tuilagi as the bellwether for England's prospects of defying the odds at the Stade Vélodrome.

"He's had to adapt, he's had to overcome setbacks," Borthwick said. "What you see with Manu is somebody who is incredibly resilient, somebody that the other players have incredible respect for.

"He's a great cornerstone within this team. He's a quiet man, goes about his work in that understated manner. We're very fortunate to have him. With that ability, resilience, willing to overcome setbacks — which could be said for a number of players — which is why I'm expecting England now to overcome a lot of things."

England in 2019 were the youngest team in the professional era to reach a World Cup final. Even without Owen Farrell and Ben Youngs, two Test centurions, this team is the second most experienced that England have fielded.

Twelve of England's 2019 World Cup squad are in the 23 this weekend, ten of whom played in the final. That would be 14 if Farrell and Billy Vunipola were not banned.

Given the age profile from 2019, that should be no surprise. Yet, nobody in 2019 would have called Dan Cole to be starting England's first game of the 2023 World Cup. Nobody would have called it even a month ago but Kyle Sinckler has regressed and England have decided they need tight-head solidity.

England have a huge depth issue at tight-head prop, just one of the problems that fell to Borthwick when he took over as head coach at the turn of the year. It will take more than nine Tests to fix.

Another issue Borthwick faced was that hardly any of the 2019 squad are better players now than they were. The numbers bear it out.

Tuilagi's resilience might be important for England, given the hole they are in, but his output is way down on 2019. His past three years of Test rugby compared to 2019 show he is down in gainline success, metres gained, defenders beaten, line breaks, passes, offloads, tries and assists. He has gone up markedly in one key facet: dominant tackles.

Maro Itoje is not the all-court permanuisance he was in 2019. His lineout steals are down, his turnovers won are down and his carrying is down. There are far fewer game-changing moments from the Saracens lock.

Curry has improved as a dominant tackler and is still the same turnover threat on the floor. Ellis Genge, who did not make the bench in 2019, has risen to become England vice-captain. If he doesn't seem quite the player of two years ago, he is probably the England player to make the biggest strides.

I think Elliot Daly is a better wing than full back so he can go into the positives category and George Ford's standards remained high for Leicester Tigers and Sale Sharks throughout the two years when Eddie Jones did not pick him.

He probably feels well out of it. England's downturn began in lockdown in the autumn of 2020, a year after they reached the World Cup final and scraped past a third-string France team to win the Autumn Nations Cup in extra time.

Bar a defiant 2-1 Test series win in Australia, which was gutsy although low in quality, England have been consistently poor. Through all that time, England supporters were promised jam tomorrow.

Now it literally *is* tomorrow. There is a nation waiting to fall back in love with its rugby team. And nobody in the world wants that more than Borthwick.



Borthwick says Tuilagi, right, is a bellwether for defying the odds

How they line up

England		Argentina
F Steward, Leicester	15	J C Mallía, Toulouse
J May, Gloucester	14	E Boffelli, Edinburgh
J Marchant, Stade Français	13	L Cinti, Saracens
M Tuilagi, Sale Sharks	12	S Chocobares, Toulouse
E Daly, Saracens	11	M Carreras, Newcastle
G Ford, Sale Sharks	10	S Carreras, Gloucester
A Mitchell, Northampton	9	G Bertranou, Dragons
E Genge, Bristol Bears	1	T Gallo, Benetton
J George, Saracens	2	J Montoya (c), Leicester
D Cole, Leicester	3	F Gómez Kodela, Lyon
M Itoje, Saracens	4	M Alemanno, Gloucester
O Chessum, Leicester	5	T Lavanini, Clermont
C Lawes (c), Northampton	6	P Matera, Mie Honda Heat
T Curry, Sale Sharks	7	M Kremer, Clermont
B Earl, Saracens	8	J M González, Saracens

Replacements (England)	Replacements (Argentina)
T Dan, Saracens	A Creevy, Sale Sharks
J Marler, Harlequins	J Sclavi, La Rochelle
W Stuart, Bath	E Bello, Newcastle
G Martin, Leicester	G Petti, Bordeaux Bègles
L Ludlam, Northampton	P Rubiolo, Newcastle
D Care, Harlequins	R Bruni, Bayonne
M Smith, Harlequins	L Bazán, Rovigo Delta
O Lawrence, Bath	M Moroni, Newcastle

Referee M Raynal (Fr) **Assistant** B O'Keeffe (NZ) and P Brousset (Fr) **TMO** M Jonker (SA)

Fading star

Manu Tuilagi *Figures per 80 minutes

	2019	2020-2023
Carries	9.1	8.6
Gainline success %	69	55
Metres gained	42.8	31.6
Defenders beaten	3	1.3
Line breaks	0.9	0.5
Passes	3.1	2.5
Offloads	0.7	0.6
Penalties conceded	0.5	0.3
Tackles made	6.3	6.4
Missed tackles	2	2.1
Tackle %	76	75
Dominant tackles	0.3	1.1



England have missed Curry, left, who returns against Argentina. Inset, Itoje cannot keep up with Ollie Chessum

Battle-hardened

Most caps in an England matchday squad

Match	Caps
v Ireland, Aug 2023	1,067
v Argentina tomorrow	1,064
v South Africa, Nov 2019	1,044
v New Zealand, Oct 2019	1,027

Source: Opta

This is my last shot – I'll

CONTINUED FROM BACK

represent a mighty challenge. "The whole pack are going to need a big performance this weekend, to be honest," Lawes said. "We are going against another big pack but we have got some extraordinary players. I am very confident in the boys around me."

This will be Lawes's fourth World Cup, having played for England in the 2011, 2015 and 2019 editions. He is determined to make it a special send-off, knowing he will not make the next one, as he will be 38 in 2027.

"I do have unfinished business with the World Cup," Lawes said. "This will be my last shot at winning a World Cup so personally I'm going to give it absolutely everything I've got and I'm sure, 100 per cent sure, the boys are going to follow me in."

One player desperate for the game is Curry. The Sale Sharks back-row forward has not yet featured under Borthwick, who said he was now in "fantastic physical condition" after injury troubles. Curry suffered two hamstring tears, to each leg, which led to him missing the Six Nations, and then damaged ankle ligaments when falling from a lineout in training last month.

Curry has not played since the Gallagher Premiership final on May 27, when Sale lost to Saracens, so cannot wait to start in Marseille.

"I've been locked away in a gym for a few weeks, so naturally there's quite a bit [of energy]," Curry, 25, said. "The emotion is huge, the first game in a World

this hole with underdog spirit

DAN MULLAN/GETTY IMAGES



give absolutely everything, says Lawes

Cup. We're an extremely passionate England team.

"I'm quite jealous of the lads whose first World Cup this is because they don't understand how exciting it's going to be. When Saturday comes it's going to be special. It's hard because you can't write it down but it's a feeling. I think Saturday is going to be fun."

Borthwick said he picked Mitchell for his ability to snipe around the fringes of rucks, saying that was one of the small positives he could take from the 30-22 defeat by Fiji two weeks ago — Mitchell's first Test start. "I thought he played well and he's trained exceptionally well," Borthwick said of the Northampton Saints No 9. "He was a dangerous running threat [against Fiji]."

Mitchell was left out of Borthwick's squad at the end of June, but returned to the 33-man World Cup squad in August when Jack van Poortvliet damaged his ankle and was ruled out.

Jonny May, who starts on the wing, was another initially discarded by Borthwick, but returned when Anthony Watson tore his calf. "Jonny's preparation on a daily basis is an example to everyone," Borthwick said of the 33-year-old Gloucester wing.

"He has been fantastic. Every training day he has competed hard. I couldn't ask more of him, he's been exemplary in that regard. Jonny has done every training session with us, every day with us, and then stepped into that Fiji game.

"I talked about the performance of Mitch and the performance of Jonny was also very good and he's earned his selection in the team for this week."

Borthwick used Watson's injury as an example of how he feels the country still cares about his England team. One of his two sons, Hunter, wrote a letter to the wing when he was ruled out of the World Cup, expressing his sadness that he had been injured. "He sensed that people in this country feel an attachment to this team, they feel a passion for this team," Borthwick said.

England v Argentina
Stade de Marseille
Tomorrow, kick-off 8pm
TV: ITV1, from 7.15pm
Radio: BBC 5 Live

Smith at full back is not radical, it's natural

Stuart Barnes



Why do we Englishmen always see the risks? The inclusion of Marcus Smith on the bench to cover full back, as well as fly half, shouldn't be a headline. Asked by Kevin Sinfield, the England defence coach, if he has played full back before, Smith is reported to have said: "No, but I love it."

Immediately the worriers wondered what will happen when Argentina bombard Smith. He has minimal experience at full back, other than those training sessions where we are no longer sure whether England are good or bad. I hear he's also too short and can't tackle. Yes, there's no getting away from the first concern but not the second and third.

Smith is a No 10 but has spent the best part of his defensive career in the deep. He has fabulous hand-eye coordination. He can catch and he can counterattack in a way that the clumsier Freddie Steward cannot. A loose kick could be an opportunity for England to finally liberate their broken-field game. Smith's final 15 minutes against Fiji was the only positive on another dreadful day.

If Santiago Carreras, of Argentina, kicks badly with Smith patrolling the field in the second half — or whenever Steve Borthwick is forced to chase the game — England will benefit, not so much from a wildly different type of full back but from the presence of the second playmaker. Smith will have time to pick the space and counterattack.

What if the Gloucester man's kicks are perfect? Fine. Steward didn't win the 50-50 aerial competitions for the majority of August. And, anyway, let's reiterate, Smith can be full back without standing directly beneath the flak. Back threes are flexible. They should be fluid in a way England are generally not.

As for the final aspect of Smith's game, his tackling; he's more likely to make the last-ditch one-on-one tackle than the Leicester oak. Speed and balance count for more than ballast when Mateo Carreras is dancing down the wing. Indeed, if you are anti-Smith, playing him in an unaccustomed position is good news from a defensive viewpoint. Fly halves make far more tackles than full backs. If we see too many one-on-one situations then it means that England's system *and* personnel have already failed.

More minutes at No 15 would have been ideal but England are in anything but an ideal situation. Getting Smith on the field to inject adrenaline into the zombie nature of this team is perhaps more of a gamble than it should be but it's not the radical decision being portrayed by many.

In fact, England are anything but trendsetting. They remain followers of fashion. Counterattack is set to challenge the hegemony of the boring boot in the next few months because of the sort of counterattackers strolling around, full of deadly intent in the back field.

Just ponder tonight's thrilling opener between France and New Zealand. Thomas Ramos was a schoolboy fly half who found his muse when moved to full back. At 5ft 10in and 13st 8lb, there's not much too him — Steward is 6ft 5in, 16st 12lb — but he reads a game quite beautifully.

Against him is Beauden Barrett, one of the greatest fly halves of modern times. He was once named world player of the year as a No 10 but it is as a No 15 that New Zealand believe they can maximise his speed, skill and — yes, that word again — vision. At No 10, Richie Mo'unga orchestrates the front field, Barrett the rear. Likewise, France now have Matthieu Jalibert in tandem with Ramos.

Fly halves like a beefy inside centre, who they can feed line-breaking crash balls, but the dual decision-making 10-15 axis opens a defence like no other strategy. The worry for England wouldn't be Smith at full back, rather the wooden alignment of forwards and backs who stand stock still around him.

England must find an element of unpredictability and the statues have to start moving. Henry Arundell is potentially a more lethal finisher at full back but Smith, as the second instigator of attacks, gently nudges England towards the way the game has gone while Borthwick was dozing.

South Africa's Willie le Roux is a fly half in a full back's jersey. Italy, as well organised in attack as England have been shambolic, have a two fly half system. Ange Capuozzo has moved to the wing to accommodate the former Harlequins fly half Tommaso Allan at full back, with Paolo Garbisi an aggressive, running No 10. It's that 10-15 axis again.

Last season I argued that Blair Kinghorn should be vying not with Finn Russell for a Scotland starting place but with Stuart Hogg. Now operating with his country's two finest fly halves in tandem, Gregor Townsend's backs are more dangerous than ever.

As for England's opponents tomorrow, Santiago Carreras has made a two-year transition from a game-reading full back to a fly half of many talents.

This will be remembered as the World Cup when fly halves and full backs made the journey from No 10 to No 15 and back look natural for a gifted rugby player — and so it is. The two positions are inextricably linked. Smith a risk at 15? Nah, the critics are living in the past.



Smith, like many high-class players, has the attributes to switch roles

Sport

‘Gazza inspires me’
Maddison on why he loves to emulate his dad’s favourite player
Page 59



Stokes’ India doubt
Captain hints Test tour may be affected by knee surgery
Page 58



‘Don’t write us off – we will deliver’

Borthwick insists uninspiring England are ready

Will Kelleher
Deputy Rugby Correspondent, Marseille

Steve Borthwick has said that his players have been fired up for the World Cup by the English public having written off his side too early.

England begin the tournament against Argentina tomorrow night in a dire run of form, having lost six of nine Tests under their new head coach, who succeeded Eddie Jones in December. Argentina are largely favoured to beat them too.

Borthwick has rolled the dice with his scrum half selection by picking Alex Mitchell ahead of Ben Youngs and Danny Care to start to speed up England’s attacking game.

He has also welcomed back Tom Curry, the open-side flanker who has been out injured for three months, in what he thinks is a mobile and athletic pack.

Borthwick’s message to a weary rugby public, though, before the World Cup pool D clash at the Stade Vélodrome in Marseille, was that England should not be dismissed.

“I sense there is a feeling among the players that they’ve been written off too early,” Borthwick said. “People have called time on them a bit too early. There is a lot of class in this squad. The players have a hell of a lot more to go. They can’t wait to get stuck in on Saturday night.

“I sense from them there is a real determination to go and put their best performances on the park. I sense the frustration about what people have been saying about them, and right now as I sit here and prepare, and coach this team this last week, I have an expectation that they will go and perform with the quality that they have.”

Courtney Lawes captains England in the absence of Owen Farrell, who is banned for the Argentina and Japan pool matches.

Lawes said that the players are driven by the negativity that has surrounded them this summer, after defeats by Wales, Ireland and Fiji, and the suspensions of Farrell and the No 8 Billy Vunipola.

“There is definitely a frustration,” Lawes, who starts at blind-side flanker in a back row with Curry and the No 8 Ben Earl, said. “It’s obviously a bit of fuel for the fire and gives us motivation. We feel it as much as anybody. Obviously we want to perform for each other, mainly.

“We are in the thick of it and we are doing everything we can to make sure, come this weekend, we are firing on all cylinders. We are going out all guns blazing and we are going to give it everything we have got.”

Lawes knows his pack must stand up to the formidable Argentina forwards. In players such as Julián Montoya, Matías Alemanno, Tomás Lavanini, Pablo Matera, Marcos Kremer and Juan Martín González — plus six more forwards on the bench — the Pumas

Continued on page 64

DAVID ROGERS/GETTY IMAGES



Antoine Dupont will lead France against New Zealand tonight

Allez! The Rugby World Cup is here
Today
Six pages of unrivalled analysis
Tomorrow
12-page Scrum supplement





Antony faces fresh claim of assault

Martyn Ziegler Chief Sports Reporter

A second woman has come forward to make accusations against the Manchester United player Antony.

Ingrid Lana, a 33-year-old banker, says Antony tried to have sex with her at his house in England in October but that she resisted and was pushed against a wall and hit her head.

It comes after Antony, 23, was withdrawn from the Brazil squad this week after he was accused of abusing Gabriela Cavallin, his former girlfriend.

“He tried to have [sexual] relations with me and I didn’t want to,” Lana told the Brazilian network Record TV in a interview to be screened on Sunday. “He pushed me against the wall and I hit my head. My purpose was just business. Arriving there, at his invitation, I realised that he had ulterior motives. I’ve never been anyone’s lover.”

Antony has denied any wrongdoing and his representatives also denied the latest allegations when contacted by the Brazilian news outlet Folha, saying he had been “targeted by unfounded accusations”.

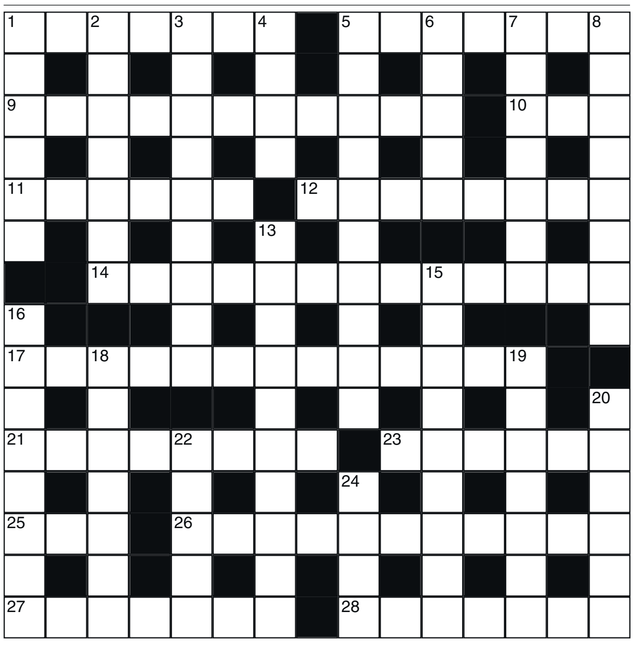
United have declined to comment on the new claims but said this week that they were taking the original accusations made by Cavallin “seriously”.

Antony has been accused of headbutting Cavallin, his former girlfriend, in a Manchester hotel room on January 15, leaving her with a cut to her head that needed treatment from a doctor. She also alleges that she was punched in the chest, causing damage to a silicone breast implant, which required corrective surgery. Police in São Paulo and Greater Manchester are investigating the allegations, which the player has denied.

United said of Cavallin’s claims: “Manchester United acknowledges the allegations made against Antony and notes that the police are conducting inquiries. Pending further information

Continued on page 60

Times Crossword 28,703



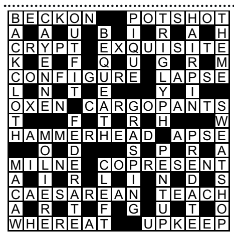
ACROSS

1 Prompt to ditch right actors for modern programme (7)
5 Somewhere driver’s seen bird by depressed area (7)
9 Somewhere driver’s seen energy-saving old banger put away (11)
10 Part of ship lacking hard timber (3)
11 Band get high in wings of stage (6)
12 Used bathroom during breaks in kind of film for kids? (8)
14 French army leader’s doctor receiving help and pro tips (4,2,7)
17 Home surrounded by huge predatory animal? Appeal to be stoical (4,3,4,2)
21 Perhaps budgie’s back feathers become less prominent (4,4)
23 Painter has hesitation about a colour he might have used? (6)
25 Boss in good four-wheel drive, not Sierra (3)
26 Like Korea, say, this could create trepidation (11)
27 Slight hurt primarily caused by telltale in school (7)
28 Perhaps like a wizard’s baked items (7)

DOWN

1 Holy man’s art posing many questions? (6)
2 Actions that are becoming green blocking oil transporter (7)
3 Articles about endlessly fascinating matriarch in Rome (9)
4 Could it be someone joining bank? (4)
5 More than one daily newspaper bores presidents (10)
6 Tribe taking in drug, or not (5)
7 Picks Greek princess with power as new leader (7)
8 Cambridge University turned to wit from the classics department with least confidence (8)
13 Writer of leader in *Sun* probing news value (10)
15 Person with conviction maybe isn’t clear when rambling (9)
16 Source of entertainment repeated in stories (3,5)
18 This person protects nurses close to wage freeze (3,4)
19 Flog hide of tiger cat (7)
20 Sailor’s right-hand man has e.g. passport taken in fight (6)
22 Revolutionary hit the booze store (5)
24 One might cower with terror (4)

Yesterday’s solution 28,702



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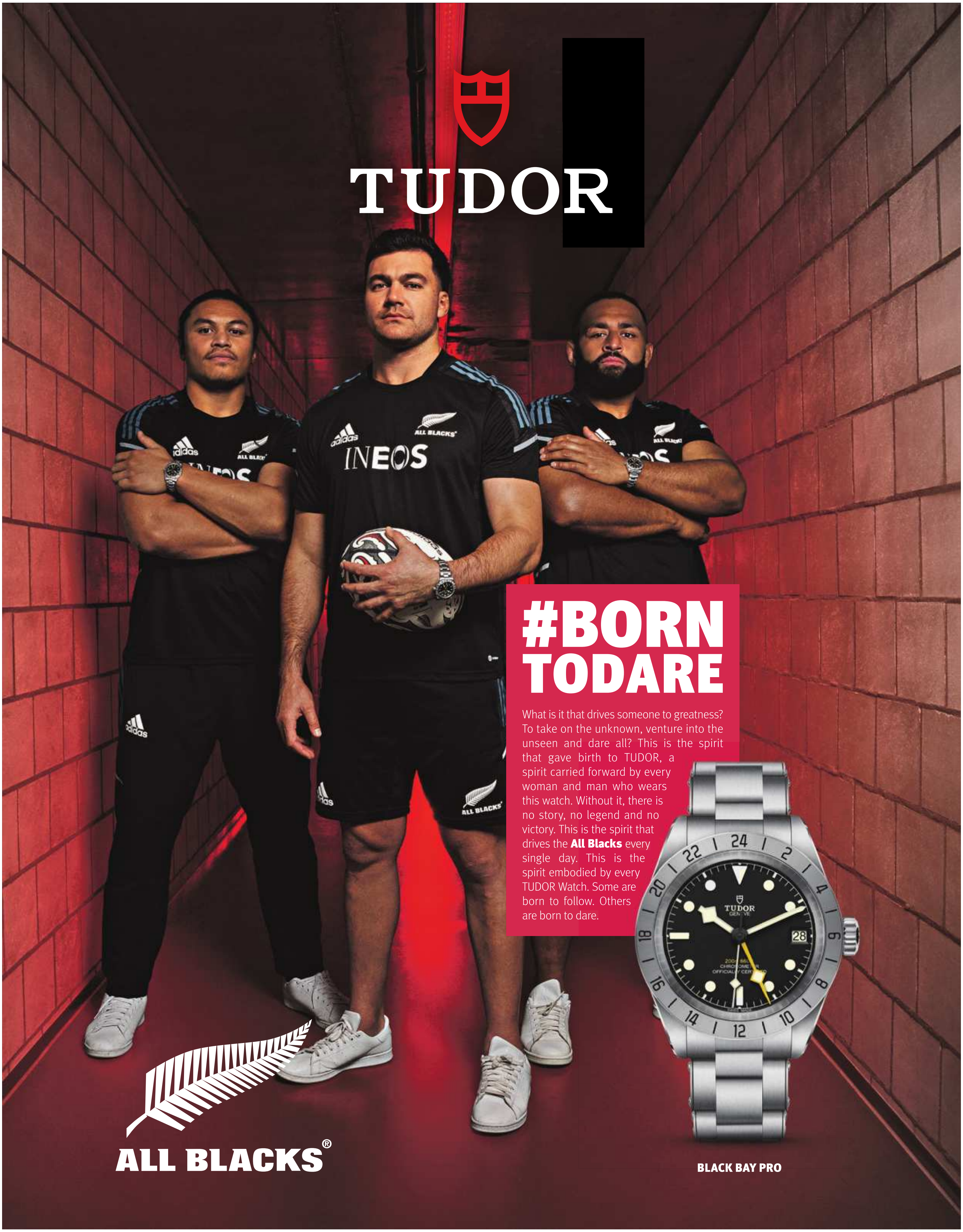
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THE TIMES

2 ARTS

September 8 | **2023**







Rock on and on

Do older artists make better music?

By Alex O'Connell

Clockwise from above: Mick Jagger; Iggy Pop; Roger Daltrey and Pete Townshend



Caitlin Moran's Celebrity Watch



6 British Met Gala

Good morning, dear Times reader, and welcome to the week where we learnt Britain had passed some kind of "sexy test". For it has been announced that, later this month, our country will host the inaugural UK version of the Met Gala — the American super-fashion party that annually brings New York grinding to a halt, as the global A-list descend in full-scale batshit couture such as Jared Leto wearing a model of his own head as a handbag.

"The event … will celebrate a mix of opera, dance, theatre and fashion," according to Vogue, which will organise the event, under the watchful eye of Vogue's global style maven, Anna Wintour.

I have to say, I find the idea of a British Met Gala deeply fascinating. As in: I suspect we can't pull it off. First of all, which seems quite a fundamental problem, we can't call it "the Met Gala" — as we don't have a Metropolitan Museum of Art to hold it in. The only way we could keep that branding synchronicity is if our "the Met" — the Metropolitan Police — hosted it, and given the recent slew of rape and murder charges they've faced, it's probably sub-optimal for them to be anywhere near an event full of, well, people.

And secondly, although hardly less crucially: the US Met Gala takes itself terribly, terribly seriously. Americans seem to view receiving an invitation as equivalent to getting a knighthood or damehood in Coolness. The guest list essentially functions as Anna Wintour's Culture Ark — whom she would ideally use post-flood to repopulate the Earth with Humanity 2.0: all triple-threat Egot winners and/or people with incredible arses, or the ability to really wear a hat without looking as though you did it for a bet.

Brits, however — we don't take parties quite this seriously? Particularly one that, legendarily, features little to no alcohol and has always been reported by Brits who've attended it as "really weird and boring, once you get inside".

Sure, Britain has beautiful people who can turn up in mad outfits and do red-carpet poses in front of the press, but once the Brits get inside the party, I fear there will be a palpable sense of, "Is this … it? The main event was — being photographed going into the event? Why is there no sex or fighting? Why is everyone sober?"

My strong supposition is that, by 10.30pm of this inaugural British not-Met Gala, the real gala will be happening at the nearest pub — which will suddenly see an influx of gala evacuees wearing 3ft-high wigs and shoes that look like armadillos, sighing with gratitude as the landlord lines up six pints of IPA on the bar. "The British Met Gala" — the most glittering night of our year — may well end up being both outsourced to, and out-sauced by, "a pub".



3 Indian moon mission

It's not that Celebrity Watch is against facts. It's more that they're not really … the primary currency this column deals in. However, I'm now considering instigating a Celebrity Watch Fact of the Week award, in the wake of a piece in the New Scientist on the recent, successful Indian moon mission.

Aside from the fact that "Indian Moon Mission" is a name waiting to be snapped up by some cool art-rock band heavily influenced by Beck, the *actual* Indian moon mission, in late August, under the control of the Indian Space Research Organisation, landed the Chandrayaan-3 spacecraft on the moon and launched the Pragyan rover onto the lunar surface, where it has been conducting experiments and searching for ice.

The Big Fact? Well, India's first lunar mission has, in total, cost £59 million. And, as the New Scientist pointed out, with a scientifically raised eyebrow, "This is less than half of the inflation-adjusted £149 million budget for the 1995 film *Apollo 13*, which needed only to depict a mission to the moon."

Once more, we can only look at Hollywood and boggle, in the words of Flight of the Conchords' *What's Going On* parody, *Think About It*, "What are your overheads?"

4 Lars von Trier

"Famed arthouse director Lars von Trier advertises for girlfriend on Instagram" shouted the headline on MailOnline — the sheer infrequency of "arthouse director" on the Mail's website causing a sweat of incongruity to rise from the phrase like a mist.

It went on to quote von Trier's tldr description of himself, in the advert: "I have Parkinson's disease, OCD, and at the moment, controlled alcoholism." Well, as advertising slogans go, it's no McDonald's "two all-beef patties, special sauce, lettuce, cheese, pickles, onions on a sesame seed bun" — but it is, at least, honest.





2 Parmesan

If you weren't previously aware of the counterfeit parmesan market — apparently worth a mind-boggling £1.6 billion a year — then you've intersected this story at exactly the right time: as Italian cheese boffins believe they have now found a way to stop it.

Yes — rejoice; for the risk of you grating hooky parm on your spag bol has now radically reduced, since, as the headlines put it, "Producers of the world-famous Parmigiano Reggiano cheese are fighting fakes — with the help of microchips."

Each genuine 1kg parmesan wheel now has a microchip — the size of a grain of salt — injected into its rind, which can be scanned, to confirm legitimacy.

Of course, in a world of conspiracy theories, this could be a risky option: if online antivax nuts were riled about having microchips injected by secret government cabals, and the rise of big pharma, wait until they hear about … big parma.

Thank you. Thank you for listening to my joke.



5 Jonathan Cheban

To know who Jonathan Cheban is, it's best to start with Augustus De Morgan's 1872 poem *Siphonaptera*, and his observation that, "Great fleas have little fleas upon their backs to bite 'em/ And little fleas have lesser fleas, and so ad infinitum."

In this case, the reality TV star Kim Kardashian is the great flea, and the little flea that bites upon her is long-term pal Jonathan Cheban. Over the past decade Cheban has used his proximity to Kardashian to leverage his own social media career, under the modest name @foodgod — wherein he basically posts about foods he has eaten and somehow manages to get paid between $10,000 and $30,000 a month for publicising said foods. No fleas on this flea. Cheban making dollar.

OR IS HE? For, this month, we learnt the worrying news that Cheban's entire career is under threat, since his encounter with an exploding bottle of Korean spicy sauce. In October 2020 Cheban purchased a bottle of San-J's Korean BBQ Sauce from a grocery store in Jacksonville, Florida. What happened next both puts global warming into perspective and is taken from the wording of the $20 million lawsuit Cheban has subsequently filed against the barbecue sauce company.

He took the sauce from his refrigerator, when he was preparing dinner, when the bottle "inexplicably exploded", the filing claims — resulting in a large gash on his hand, causing "significant blood loss".

The blood wasn't the most significant loss, however. For nearly three years after the accident, Cheban alleges that the injury has affected his livelihood, due to losing the "ability to use his hand in his social media posts, in his advertisements, and in his ability to sponsor various food items".

Cheban's social media hand has been broken by a Korean sauce — a statement that might well qualify as "the most 2023 sentence possible".

It has to be said, even Cheban's fans have taken the news of his $20 million claim against the Korean sauce company quite sceptically: "There are people with real world problems, serious disabilities, not having access to clean water and your [sic] trying to sue because a bottle broke. I wish you well but do better!"

And his lawsuit raises an unexpected theological point: if a "food god" tries to put a food company out of business, is this, technically … a smiting?

Only one thing is for sure: if Kim Kardashian is the great flea, and Jonathan Cheban the little flea, then his lawyers are, surely, the lesser fleas — and so ad infinitum.

1A

Fyre Festival 2

As sequels go, Fyre Festival 2 — due to be held in the summer of 2024 — is as unlikely as eg: Waterworld 2: More Water, or Liz Truss having a second pop at being prime minister. And yet, as all terrible, mad things eventually do, it's happening!

The first Fyre Festival, for those who don't remember, was described, in the subsequent and many lawsuits, as being like *The Hunger Games* or *Lord of the Flies*. Which would have been cool if it was either a smash-hit movie starring Jennifer Lawrence or a classic GCSE text. Unfortunately, Fyre Festival was supposed to be a super-luxurious A-list festival held in the Bahamas that promised attendees the chance to hang out with the supermodels Kendall Jenner and Bella Hadid, enjoy top-class accommodation in "futuristic geodesic domes" and the finest of foods from "celebrity chefs". As an additional extra, you could "swim with pigs" — not a mafia euphemism, but a genuine option for those into piscine/porcine mash-ups.

However, as social media gleefully reported, as the weekend of the Fyre Festival unfolded, it didn't quite work out like that. The supermodels didn't turn up, nor did the bands who were scheduled to play. The luxury accommodation turned out to be disaster relief tents, "equipped" with mattresses that had been left outside during a previous rainstorm, and the finest of foods were disbelievingly photographed and uploaded when they turned out to be a rather dry-looking bread roll and what might well be the world's saddest piece of lettuce. And the swimming pigs? The swimming pigs clearly had the same management as the supermodels — they were a no-show too.

Anyway, long story short, the festival collapsed; the punters — some of whom had paid more than $17,000 for their "luxury packages" — had to be evacuated off the island; and the lawsuits led to the organiser Billy McFarland — who is described on Wikipedia as "a con artist" — serving three years in jail for fraud.





But now — he's back!

"We are targeting Fyre Festival 2 for the end of next year," McFarland, *below*, now released from jail, excitedly announced on TikTok last week. "Guys, this is your chance to get in. This is everything I've been working towards. Let's f***ing go!"

"Early birds" have been offered ticket deals at $499, but those who tarry will have to cough up between $799 and $7,999 as the festival date nears.

The thing is, weirdly in some ways, there is a market for a festival that has had no less than three, all deeply entertaining, documentaries made about what a disaster it was. "Fyre Festival" has become a byword for exquisitely hubristic failure, and it has spawned dozens of meme-able clips and quotes. In other words, it is a famous brand. It has "cut through", as evidenced by the fact that McFarland's announcement of "Fyre 2" was carried by almost every major news organisation in the world. You can see why McFarland — as he spent his time in jail, morosely carving models of swimming pigs out of soap — thought, "I have a known commodity here. Fyre has an almost mythic status. It must have some value that I can cash in on, by … staging a sequel!"

However, the problem is that the only people who would want to go to Fyre Festival 2 would be those who are, as they say, "In it for the LOLZ." Anyone coughing up $799 in advance to go to the sequel of a legendarily catastrophic festival is going because they want to go to a legendarily catastrophic festival. That, when it comes down to it, is the only brand McFarland has to sell. The early-bird punters are those who are amused by the idea of posting shots to Instagram of themselves sitting in an emergency-relief tent, eating mud, then being evacuated off the island by a helicopter. They're disaster tourists. Attending Fyre Festival 2 is the pop-cultural equivalent of those people who take selfies in the exclusion zone around Chernobyl.

But of course, the one thing McFarland doesn't want to do is … helm another disastrous festival. He's only just got out of chokey for the last one! Unless he's genuinely, masochistically insane, Fyre Festival 2 will, in all probability, be … perfectly functional. Not in any way amazing — what top band, supermodel or, indeed, swimming pig would sign a contract with a jailbird scam artist? — but unlikely to be borderline cataclysmic. Which will, ironically, disappoint anyone willing to pay for a ticket.

What is the moral of all this? Hard to say. Don't swim with pigs? Or, for McFarland, "Get a proper job"? Ultimately, perhaps, it's just, "never attend a festival by a man who can't spell the word 'fire'".

What happens at a film festival with no stars? Lots of protests

In Venice controversy is on every corner, says Kevin Maher

Ah, the Venice Lido. Seven miles of glamorous sun-kissed sand, otherwise known as the "island of rapists". Or at least it is now, after homemade protest banners with provocative statements (the least inflammatory was, "Sexist cinema/feminist response") appeared overnight, glued to the ground on key Lido hotspots — designed to embarrass this year's Venice Film Festival for celebrating the work of the film-makers Roman Polanski, Luc Besson and Woody Allen. Another banner, stuck to the pavement just around the corner from my hotel, struck a more inquisitive note when it asked: "Will the Golden Lion go to a rapist?"

None of this, of course, was a surprise. At a time when the Hollywood strikes have banished most American stars from publicity duties and red carpet appearances, the normally glamorous and Oscar-launching Venice Film Festival has been left with a media hole at its centre. Hmmm, what to fill it with? What about protests?

Everywhere you look, someone's at it. The jury president and *La La Land* director Damien Chazelle set the tone by arriving in a pro-strike T-shirt and castigating Hollywood's approach to movie "content". The jury member and *Power of the Dog* director Jane Campion then joined an "impromptu" (ie scheduled) flashmob protest on the red carpet, before the premiere of Bradley Cooper's Leonard Bernstein biopic, *Maestro*, to show solidarity with the women's freedom protests in Iran, obviously.

At the screening of *Maestro* — a Netflix production — when the company's logo appeared, an overexcited journalist roared out: "Pay writers!" While at the subsequent press conference the film's Oscar-winning Japanese make-up artist Kazu Hiro was effectively forced to apologise for fitting the non-Jewish Cooper with a latex nose that was selected to make him appear similar to the Jewish Bernstein but, said furious commentators, smacked of culturally insensitive "Jew-face". "I wasn't expecting that to happen," a chastened Hiro said. "I feel sorry that I hurt some people's feelings."

And then came the banner crowd, appearing a day after their provocative posters were first spotted, and hitting the Lido as a 20-strong co-ordinated strike team on the red carpet premiere of Woody Allen's latest comedy, *Coup de Chance*.

There was a genuine question to be asked about why Venice had included Besson's movie, *Dogman*, in the competition. A preposterous and poorly executed thriller about a cross-dressing, dog-whispering criminal kingpin (played by Caleb Landry Jones), it barely belongs in cinemas, let alone in the world's most prestigious film competition. It seemed as if the Venice organisers were either genuflecting blindly before an establishment auteur or deliberately cocking a snook at the activist communities who have consistently highlighted the sexual abuse allegations that have shadowed Besson's career — he was cleared of rape earlier this summer.



Kevin Maher at the Woody Allen protest

At Woody Allen's premiere 20 people shouted slogans and took off their tops

Polanski, equally, did not belong in Venice, or any cinematic universe. His latest "comedy", *The Palace*, about wacky misadventures in a Swiss hotel on New Year's Eve in 1999, was the worst of his, or almost any other film-maker's, career. And yet it was here, on the Lido, adding justifiable fuel to the protest mood, and pushing the banner-posting squad towards their climactic intervention on the night of the Allen premiere.

Which was a shame. Because, in the tradition of all the great movie twists, they picked the wrong target. Allen's movie, a French-language comedy thriller about a marriage spiralling towards murder, is the best he's made in a decade. And he knows it. Earlier that day, when asked once again about #MeToo and cancel culture, he began to push back, saying: "I've made 50 films. I've always had very good parts for women, always had women in the crew, always paid them the exact same amount that we paid men, worked with hundreds of actresses, and never, ever had a single complaint from any of them."

And still, the protesters hit the carpet. I was there. They began by shouting slogans, such as: "The alpha male does not exist!" They were soon shepherded by Venice security to a quieter spot, away from the carpet, where they stood in a line and, on cue, took off their tops. At which point the cameras came out, the pictures were snapped, and the media hole was filled. The scene by then, however, had taken on the mood of an absurdist sketch from, ironically enough, vintage-era Woody Allen. It was very bizarre. And very Venice 2023.

Richard Morrison

This has been one of the best Proms seasons in 60 years. It needed to be



Sometimes, even in Britain, people do learn from their mistakes. I hope that's the case with the BBC. Less than a year ago its long-cherished reputation as a champion of classical music was in tatters. Its professional choir was told it was being dismantled. Its orchestras were threatened with personnel cuts. And its top executives gave the impression that they had zero understanding or appreciation of the musical ensembles bearing the BBC's name.

I won't say I'm convinced that this lamentable corporate mindset has been turned around. But something is undeniable. The 2023 BBC Proms, which come to an end this weekend, have been one of the best seasons I can remember in my six decades of promming. I think my colleagues would agree too, judging from their reviews.

We generally award five stars to performances that will live in our memory for years. This summer no fewer than six Proms won that accolade from The Times. (If you want to catch them on BBC Sounds, they were Simon Rattle's "farewell" Mahler Nine, Aurora's *The Rite of Spring* from memory, Gyorgy Kurtag's weird yet compelling setting of Samuel Beckett's *Endgame*, the "dream couple" of the conductor Klaus Makela and the pianist Yuja Wang, the troubled but triumphant performance of Berlioz's *Les Troyens*, and the dazzling National Youth Orchestra.) In many more Proms too I felt that the musicians were straining every sinew to create a real "event" — which is what every Prom should be, given how attentively that vast standing audience listens to the music.

And the BBC's experiment of running Proms not just at the Royal Albert Hall but around the country (for example, a whole weekend of concerts, covering a multitude of genres, at the Sage Gateshead) brought in a new audience. In fact, audience figures seem back to pre-pandemic levels. The BBC says that

SISI BURN/BBC



Gyorgy Kurtag's setting of Endgame

more than half of the 71 Proms completely sold out, that 3.2 million people watched the Proms' opening weekend on TV (an extraordinary figure — far more than watch *Match of the Day*) and that a new partnership with TikTok has already produced 900,000 views of Proms videos, predominantly (I imagine) by the under-30s.

In fact the season has had the feeling of a rebirth. What produced that? One reason, I believe, is that the BBC's actions last year shocked musicians and music lovers alike into a realisation that what they had taken for granted all their lives — the BBC's profound commitment to classical music — was in serious danger of ending unless everyone rallied round and showed how much it was valued. In so many Proms this summer I sensed musicians — especially in the BBC orchestras — performing as if their lives depended on it, and audiences determined to show how much they appreciated what they were hearing.

I'm told that the BBC's top echelons have, this year, been conspicuously present at numerous Proms. If that's the case, I hope they picked up the same vibes as I did. Classical music is not a niche activity for a few. Given the right mainstream broadcasting coverage, it can touch the hearts of millions. Only the BBC has the resources and public service mandate to do that. Let's hope it never again wavers in that mission.

Concrete plans

So far, it seems, the Raac crisis that has closed schools and other buildings has had little impact on the arts world. A handful of theatres have shut because their foyers or backstage included Raac ceilings. Two big venues — St David's Hall in Cardiff and the National Theatre in London — have also identified Raac in their buildings but say they can deal with it without closing or endangering users.

But if the arts world has got off lightly, that's sheer good luck. The vast majority of UK performing venues are either very old — Victorian and Edwardian venues — or relatively new: theatres and concert halls built during the lottery-financed boom of the past 25 years. Very few went up during the 1970s and 1980s heyday of Raac. And anyway, as a theatre architect friend points out, Raac would never have been deemed appropriate for the long, complex roof spans of auditoriums and stages — only for foyers or dressing rooms.

We should be grateful for small mercies. Our arts venues have enough financial nightmares already.

Brum's arts scene is on the brink

Five years ago I pointed out that Birmingham was run by councillors who seemed blithely unconcerned by such mundane matters as balancing the city's budget or making sure the bins were emptied. Not when they could be spending hundreds of millions hosting the Commonwealth Games, or borrowing £200 million to build a new library, then laying off half the staff to fund the £1 million-a-month interest payments on the loan.

So the idea that the city has gone bust simply because of historic equal-pay legal claims or some IT disaster strikes me as ludicrous. This is a council guilty of hubris on so many levels that a catastrophe was simply waiting to happen.

Now it has been forced to issue a section 114 notice, which stops it from instigating new funding for non-statutory activities such as culture. That leaves a huge question mark hanging over such fine institutions as the Birmingham Rep, Birmingham Royal Ballet and City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra.

Back in March they thought they had secured a £9 million three-year funding deal as part of what the council ludicrously declared to be "a golden decade of opportunity for the city". But I'm told that only the present year is covered by a signed agreement, and now the council appears to be prevented legally from signing any extension. So Birmingham's "golden decade" could include the imminent collapse of its entire arts scene. What a mess.

Rock of ages: the old ones are (still) the best

Like fine wines, most bands get better as they get older, writes Alex O'Connell

The Rolling Stones announced their new album this week with The Times's chief rock critic Will Hodgkinson declaring it their most accomplished for 45 years. "*Sweet Sounds* is a highlight of an album that is unquestionably the Stones' best since 1978's *Some Girls*," he wrote, referring to its standout song. "Variously poignant, irreverent, anarchic, and even quite spiritual on that track … it touches on all the aspects we love about the band, glued together by the rambunctious energy they have made their own since the early Sixties."

It wasn't just the music that impressed him. At the press conference at the Hackney Empire in east London Hodgkinson noted that, gratifyingly, they still looked like proper rock stars, lizard hips and all. "All of them are black-clad, stick-thin and raven-haired, really not looking like men who were born around the time of the Second World War," he wrote.



The Times Radio presenter Stig Abell's response to this Stones love-in was sniffy (well, it is still hay fever season). Oh, we do love a rock-themed duel at dawn. "We want late flowerings like the Stones' new album to be as good as the masterworks of the past, but they never are," he tweet-huffed and then, presumably, spun the band's very first big hit, *(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction*, on his Dansette while staring through rheumy eyes into a nebulous middle distance.

Meanwhile, rock Twitter woke up and scratched its bald spot. Cue a deluge of music nerdery as teams of people who would otherwise be debating the best ways to catalogue prog rock LPs leapt to the defence of music's free bus pass brigade. It was a case of Stig in the dump. What about Scott Walker, Bob Dylan, Johnny Cash — who all made masterpieces in later life? Have you *heard* Cash's *American Recordings*? Fist-bumps! Don't get me started. OK, do — but can I have a little sit down while I write?

I still love the youthful energy of pure pop — I might put on Doja Cat while I clean out the recycling bin — but when I really want to *listen*, I want lyrics from people who have lived, loved, watched friends die and possibly cut their chest open on stage with shards of glass and smothered the sores with honey as a response to growing up in industrial Michigan in the 1950s (take a careful bow, Iggy Pop — I know you've got back trouble).

If artists remember the after-effects of rationing and bashing their first shrapnel drum on the bombsites left by the Blitz, so much the better. Shakespeare, Bach, Beethoven, Tolstoy — geniuses across the spectrum have consistently made their best works as their knees were going.

First exhibit, your honour? David Bowie, of course, and his final album, *Blackstar*. I am a Bowie nut — I could even see the traces of gold in his "difficult" Tin Machine period — but not only is it my favourite of his albums, it's his most musically interesting, mysterious and moving.

I'll spare you the York Notes on each lyric but let's at least tap into its title. It's the name of a cancer lesion but it also refers back to his *Starman* period and nods to a "hidden planet" that some think will crash into the Earth. It's also the term for a transitional state between a collapsed star and a state of infinite value in physics.

Is Bowie the collapsed star, and is he referring to the state that he will enter in death? Perhaps he was going back to his musical beginnings when he was Davy Jones and evoking a little-known song by his childhood hero Elvis Presley, with whom he shared a birthday. You don't get that with Ed Sheeran.

In fact, spoken like a true ex-goth, I have realised all my favourite songs

COVER: JAVIER BRAGADO, NAOMI RAHIM, KEVIN MAZUR/GETTY IMAGES. BELOW: DAVID WOLFF-PATRICK/GETTY IMAGES; MATT CROSSICK/ALAMY





Elton John headlining the Pyramid Stage at Glastonbury in June



Who wants modern musings on Hinge dates and fake nails?

are written by artists in the sunset of their lives — and are, generally, about their impending death. It's probably not the playlist for your Zumba class, but listen to Leonard Cohen's *You Want it Darker*, released in 2016 — the year of his death — and you will smell his fear of mortality.

If you are the dealer, I'm out of the game
If you are the healer, it means I'm broken and lame
If thine is the glory, then mine must be the shame
You want it darker
We kill the flame

Just wow — as Leonard Cohen wouldn't have said. Likewise, David Crosby's *Here if You Listen*, also released just before he died, has the flooring line: "I've been thinking about dying and how to do it well."

Who wants modern musings on Hinge dates, fake nails and whinings about the heaviness of fame when you can hear a former sheet metal worker such as Roger Daltrey with a six-pack at 79 singing about what it means to be a rock star in your eighth decade, as he did on *Who*, the band's 2019 studio album. It was described by our critic as "powerful and relevant". Even more poignant is *I'll Be Back*, an acoustic ballad on the same album on which Pete Townshend sings, presumably to his younger wife, Rachel Fuller, that she shouldn't worry about death taking him away because he will reincarnate (what as? Now that sounds like a subject for a radio show).

Next, Bob Dylan. Hands up, I appreciate Dylan but am not one of those people who bid for the windows of his old house on eBay after its most recent owners replaced them (true story). But I know enough to know that *Murder Most Foul*, his surprise release in 2020 — about JFK's assassination, but also a reflection on the entire baby boom generation from the vantage point of age — was up there with his very best. Meditations on grief and decay don't tend to be the subjects of rock debuts. Those songs need to lie on their side in a dark cellar for decades before they're worth cracking open.

The Rolling Stones performing in Paris last year. Left: Bruce Springsteen in concert last month. Far left: David Bowie

"Oh, got you there!" I hear you cry. What about Neil Young, who wrote *Old Man* as a whippersnapper in 1972? (It's about the old caretaker of his ranch, who asked him how a young hippy had the money to buy it.) Young reflected in those lyrics on how little difference there is between young and old.

All I can think is that the Canadian folk-rock king was unaware of his outlier status — and thank goodness he hadn't then heard *(It Goes Like) Nanana* by this year's young pop favourite Peggy Gou or we might have had a very different song. Gou's sample lyric:

I guess it goes like na-na-na
Na-na-na-na-na, na-na-na-na-na
Na-na-na-na-na, na-na-na-na-na
Na-na-na-na-na, na-na-na-na-na
Na-na-na-na-na, na-na-na-na-na

Sometimes, with the weight of expectation behind them, artists can just get on with the business of doing what they love in later life and the freedom is there for all to hear. Van Morrison released a skiffle album this year — his 44th studio LP — returning to his first love and "coming home", as our critic put it.

Likewise, Bruce Springsteen's 21st studio album, released last year, was a collection of beloved soul music gems from Motown, Gamble and Huff, Stax and more. "I wanted an album where I just sang," Springsteen, 73, has said.

And, well, he does, rather well. Meanwhile, *The Girl Is Crying in Her Latte*, the recent album from Sparks, who have been playing together for 50 years, managed to sound utterly different to their previous albums, if still identifiably them, and received raves.

Grace Jones, 75, has had fun with a new collaboration this year — letting rip on Janelle Monáe's *Ooh La La* and bringing in a new audience, as Elton John did with Dua Lipa on *Cold Heart*. Jones's gig at Hampton Court in June was greeted with general euphoria, her voice good enough to bring the palace down with her rendition of *Amazing Grace*.

Older age also allows artists the chance to tie up loose ends left from their early careers, when, perhaps, life got too messy for completion. At 78, Townshend is at last wrapping up his

At 78, Pete Townshend is wrapping up his third rock opera

third rock opera, *Lifehouse*, which predicted the internet.

And don't let anyone say that old rockers and musicians lack stamina and showmanship. The previously mentioned Mr Pop, 79, won great reviews for his live shows this summer — and the best live show I have ever seen was his Royal Albert Hall gig in 2016 for his sensational late-life album *Post Pop Depression*.



Grace Jones

Elton, 76, and Springsteen are having their health complications of late, but Elton thrilled Glastonbury this summer and Springsteen has been magnificent on his European tour, before news of his peptic ulcer disease led to the postponement of a half-leg of his US tour. Reviewing the gig in Barcelona this year, our critic declared: "The whole thing blasted with the thing 60,000 Spaniards filled a former Olympic stadium on the edge of Barcelona for: passion." You don't get that from George Ezra and Ben Howard.

Get well soon, Bruce, our country needs you.

THE CRITICS

Mamma Mia! — but minus the songs

The third Big Fat Greek film is flat, save for some gorgeous scenery, says Ed Potton

Well, at least the Greek tourist board will be happy. In the third instalment of the rom-com series the Greek-American clan finally find their way from Chicago to the mother country, and it looks ravishing: turquoise water, sun-baked olive groves, charming labyrinthine villages. Scratch the travel-porn surface, though, and it's like a half-built hotel with the steel rods poking out of the concrete pillars.

Twenty years after the first film, Toula Portokalos (Nia Vardalos) is still married to Ian Miller (John Corbett) and her family is still loud, chaotic and interfering. What has changed is that her mother, Maria, has dementia and her father, Gus, is dead, like Michael Constantine, the actor who played him. A reunion party in the village where Gus grew up affords the chance for a family trip — none of them has been to Greece before. So onto the plane they go, Toula, Ian, their college-age daughter Paris (Elena Kampouris), Toula's crass brother Nick (Louis Mandylor) and other family members, plying the cabin crew with souvlaki.

A multigenerational cast, holiday shenanigans, long-lost relatives and gorgeous Aegean locations — it's basically *Mamma Mia!* without the songs. But the songs were what made *Mamma Mia!* work, and without them things get tired pretty quickly.

Vardalos wrote the script, as she did for the Oscar-nominated original film and its disappointing sequel, but this is the first one she has directed. It's amiable enough, but devoid of real surprise or jeopardy and full of hokey guff about accepting people for who they really are. Nick trimming his nasal hairs at the table is just about funny the first time but not the fourth.

COURTESY OF YANNIS DRAKOULIDIS/FOCUS FEATURES



John Corbett, far left, and Nia Vardalos, fourth from left, return in a tired instalment of the series

My Big Fat Greek Wedding 3
12A, 92min
★★☆☆☆

And will the Greeks thank Vardalos for being portrayed, yet again, as gluttonous, unstable, bouzouki-obsessed and distrustful of foreigners?

The main pleasure is to be found in the more eccentric characters. Melina Kotselou is endearingly enthusiastic as the gender-fluid mayor of the village (anything she likes, from Greece to a good selfie, is "No 1! The best!"), while Andrea Martin is again a delight as Voula, Toula's imperious aunt. Her response to any domestic crisis? To "find a solution together using threats and guilt".

In cinemas



Once Upon a Time in Uganda
15, 94min
★★★★☆

Dubbed "Uganda's Tarantino", Isaac Nabwana is a creative dynamo who directs hilarious DIY action movies with titles such as *Crazy World* and *Eaten Alive in Uganda*. Working with no money, sporadic electricity and rudimentary technology in Wakaliga, a slum in Kampala, he somehow conjures up car chases, explosions, kung-fu sequences and convincing props — the multi-barrelled machinegun is inspired.

Cathryne Czubek's exuberant documentary is told through the eyes of Alan Hofmanis, an American film worker who helps Nabwana's studio, Wakaliwood, to get international traction and becomes an unwitting star for the director, who sees the potential for an exciting new subgenre: "beating up the white person". Their bromance is heart-warming but will be tested by an approach from Ugandan TV. Czubek treads a delicate line, managing to avoid patronising Nabwana or portraying Hofmanis as a white saviour, and the ending is worthy of Hollywood and Wakaliwood. EP

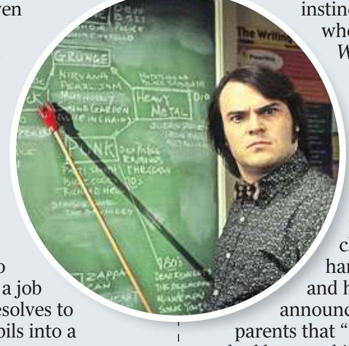
In cinemas

classic film

School of Rock (2003)
12A, 109min
★★★★☆

Twenty years have passed since Richard Linklater's classroom knees-up, although it may not seem like it given that the spin-off TV series ran until 2018 and Andrew Lloyd Webber's stage version is still playing in theatres from Madrid to Tokyo.

Jack Black gives a career-defining performance as a failed guitarist who fraudulently lands a job as a teacher and resolves to turn his drippy pupils into a rock'n'roll juggernaut.



Career-defining performance: Jack Black

The film was a blip of conventionality for Linklater, who is known for arthouse hits such as *Boyhood*, and the writer Mike White, who gave his dark instincts free rein when he created *The White Lotus*.

Yet there are subversive details that elevate it beyond standard feelgood fare, notably Black's insistence on treating his young charges like battle-hardened veterans and his straight-faced announcement to their parents that "I have been touched by your kids. And I'm pretty sure that I've touched them." EP

In selected cinemas

film reviews

STUDIOCANAL



Teo Yoo as Hae Sung and Greta Lee as Nora

The Oscars are in the bag

the big film

Celine Song's flawless, complex debut explores lost loves, hidden yearnings and childhood selves. Kevin Maher falls under its spell

Sometimes in cinema a director emerges with a first film and just, well, nails it. They often come from theatre, and although they may be inexperienced in framing, lighting and blocking, their stage background gives them an innate understanding of dramatic ebb and flow and of the cathartic possibilities of characters on the emotional edge. Think of the theatre-honed debuts of Sam Mendes (*American Beauty*), David Mamet (*House of Games*) or, yes, even Orson Welles (*Citizen Kane*).

To that list we now must add Celine Song, a Korean-born, Canada-raised and New York-based playwright who has delivered one of the finest films of the year so far. The first real Oscar contender of 2023, it's a *Brief Encounter*-style heartbreaker about an inevitable and yet impossible love that's rooted in the honesty of Song's own experience. It follows Nora (Greta Lee), a Seoul-born playwright living in New York, her Jewish New Yorker husband, Arthur (John Magaro), and the Korean childhood sweetheart Hae Sung (Teo Yoo), whom Nora had long since left behind but who comes crashing adorably yet painfully back into her world. Sounds simple, perhaps, and a bit familiar — didn't Saoirse Ronan face a similar dilemma in *Brooklyn*? Yet Song's film, impeccably constructed, acted and paced, is also deceptively complex.

It's structured in three chapters, marking 12-year time spans that take Nora from 12 to 24 to 36. In the first she is blissfully happy as a Seoul schoolgirl with her young playmate Hae Sung (played by Moon Seung-ah and Leem Seung-min respectively) perpetually at her side. That chapter ends with her departure for North America and a wounding separation from Hae Sung that's as significant and psychologically scarring as Charles Foster Kane's childhood split from his mother in Welles's classic.

In the second, New York-set chapter, the postgraduate Nora is randomly reconnected with Hae Sung via the patchy power of first-generation Skype. These scenes, still early in the movie, carry serious emotional voltage because they reveal in the beaming, conflicted faces of both characters feelings of relief and excitement undercut with a sickening sense of dread. This relationship, intermittent and effectively virtual, can go nowhere. It's a chance byproduct of technology and eventually becomes an impediment to intimacy. The key scene in this section follows Nora's first Skype call with Hae Sung. She walks down a Manhattan street and suddenly, impulsively, starts skipping like a child. It's the first sign from Song that the film isn't just about romance, or true love, but the deeper concerns of what really underpins that love and what hidden childhood yearnings it meets. Nora's feelings for Hae Sung, we immediately realise from this one shot, are a bridge to her younger self and to the pre-teen personality who was effectively abandoned in Korea.

Everything, however, really kicks off in the third section when Hae Sung finally zooms into New York, in the flesh, to push this particular triangle of sadness to breaking point. Here the actors Lee and Yoo at times crackle with outlandish quantities of screen chemistry, specifically mined from Song's canny decision to keep the actors apart, or at least deny them a single physical touch, until the moment came for an on-screen embrace. Song's other canny and profoundly compassionate decision was to make Magaro's Arthur enormously sympathetic too — he's smart, witty, caring — and an equal match for Hae Sung. Another less instinctive film-maker might have nudged the drama in Hae Sung's favour. There's a sense, for example, in John Crowley's *Brooklyn*, that the romantic balance between those two suitors is always slightly tilted towards Emory Cohen's earthy Tony instead of Domhnall Gleeson's rigid Jim. Here the men are evenly matched, and indeed complement each other as the separate flipsides of Nora's double identity as a Korean-born American citizen. Which makes her dilemma all the more excruciating to witness.

The film is also stylistically flawless, with Song and her cinematographer Shabier Kirchner (of Steve McQueen's *Small Axe* series) consistently framing their beleaguered protagonist within looming, sometimes oppressive New York cityscapes. The performances are impossibly strong and awards-season ready. Anything other than a best actress Oscar nomination for Lee will be criminal. And what about the film's point? It's about accepting loss and pain, and realising, in the words of Thomas Wolfe, that you can't go home again. It's a film, in short, about putting away childish things. And that's why, perhaps, it has the saddest ending of any movie since *Toy Story 3*.
In cinemas

Past Lives
12A, 106min
★★★★★

The Nun II
15, 110min
★★★☆☆

Here's another helping of lavish pseudo-religious hokum, the latest in the multibillion-dollar *Conjuring* franchise and a sequel to *The Nun* (2018). Bonnie Aarons again plays the creepy titular demon — think Marilyn Manson in a habit — who resurfaces in a French boarding school in the Fifties, having possessed the hunky handyman (Jonas Bloquet). Time to call Sister Irene (Taissa Farmiga), the ass-kicking nun, and her ballsy sidekick Sister Debra (Storm Reid).



Sisters doing it for themselves: Taissa Farmiga and Storm Reid

The accents are hilariously all over the place — Farmiga and Reid speak in their natural American while Anna Popplewell and Katelyn Rose Downey, who play a teacher and a pupil, use Irish burrs, even though they're meant to be French. The giant goat demon too is just silly. Yet it's stylishly directed by Michael Chaves — the scene in which a rack of magazines flutter themselves into a message deserves an award. Farmiga, meanwhile, makes a steely crusading heroine, the 13-year-old Downey looks convincingly terrified throughout and there's a gripping, transubstantiation-themed finale. **EP**
In cinemas

A Life on the Farm
12A, 75min
★★★★☆

The second of two charming documentaries this week about amateur film-makers (see also *Once Upon a Time in Uganda*), Oscar Harding's film exhumes the extraordinary home movies made by Charles Carson, the owner of Coombe End Farm in the fabulously named Huish Champflower in Somerset.

An English eccentric of exceptional vintage, Carson is relentlessly upbeat, whether having his hat stolen from his head by a horse, nonchalantly delivering a calf or presenting its pulsating afterbirth to the camera.

You're braced for things to get darker and they do, as he films himself wheeling his dead mother around in a wheelchair so the cows can pay their last respects. Harding's masterstroke is showing how Carson is made into a cult hero by the subculture of Americans who celebrate strange video content. It's touching to see their geeky-dude appreciation for a man who channelled his grief and loneliness into nuggets of homespun surreality. **EP**
In cinemas and on Amazon, Apple, Google, Sky and Curzon Home Cinema

music reviews

A child star grows up and finds her voice

The 20-year-old's second album of heartfelt ballads and raucous indie impresses Will Hodgkinson

The bridge from Disney star to pop star is a precarious one. Selena Gomez, Miley Cyrus, Britney Spears and Justin Timberlake are among the former showbusiness kids who had to present themselves as convincing adults, and the results were not always pretty. She is only 20, so it is too early to say how it will all pan out, but so far Olivia Rodrigo seems to be crossing that bridge at a steadier pace than most.

At 12 the singer from California starred in Disney's self-referencing *High School Musical: The Musical: The Series*, a show about a group of kids putting on a show about a group of kids putting on a show. Then in 2021, still only 17, she had the hit of the year with *drivers license*, a sad ballad about driving by the house of her old boyfriend the moment she passed her test. During her set at Glastonbury last year she dedicated a duet with Lily Allen on the latter's *F*** You* to the US Supreme Court for removing the federal right to abortion — not the kind of thing Disney puppets are given to doing. Rodrigo didn't oversexualise herself to prove she was no longer a child as Cyrus did. She hasn't crashed in the face of endless scrutiny as Spears did. Instead she has made a smart second album that flits between heartfelt balladry and raucous indie rock on songs about being — beyond worldwide fame and a few million in the bank — a typical 20-year-old.

All-American Bitch spells it out, the quiet parts detailing the image Rodrigo is meant to uphold. "I'm grateful all the time. I'm sexy and I'm kind. I'm pretty when I cry," she sings in a sarcastically lighter-than-air tone between unhinged screams about being just as angry and imperfect as the next girl. The moody rocker *Pretty Isn't Pretty* details a lifestyle of missing out on meals, using too much make-up, taking anti-anxiety pills and generally feeling insecure about your appearance, which seeing your face in "some shitty magazine" only exacerbates.

It is all very straightforward but well done, in particular *Love Is Embarrassing*, which sounds as if it belongs in John Hughes teen drama from the early Eighties, and the punky *Ballad of a Homeschooled Girl*, on which she reveals how not interacting with other kids on a daily basis has a serious downside. "Each day that I'm alive," she sings, "is social suicide."

This is mainstream stuff from a mainstream artist, with any apparent risks fitting strictly within the remit of what Rodrigo's young fans would expect. But it is characterful and easygoing, with a conversational quality that makes it stand out in the polished world of Disney alumni. There is the usual fame-is-torture moan in *Making the Bed*, the difference being that Rodrigo blames herself for pursuing it in the first place. Finally comes *Teenage Dream*, an acceptance of sorts of the life she has found herself in, which for all its obvious appeal comes at a price. "I fear they already got the best parts of me," she frets, concluding an album by a young woman grounded enough to be aware of what she's going through — and dealing with it accordingly.

pop

Olivia Rodrigo
Guts
Geffen/Interscope
★★★★☆

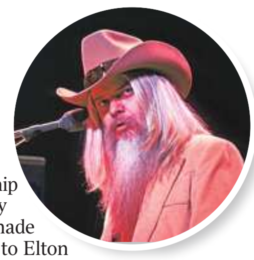


T
Jazz album
Harold López-Nussa transforms Afro-Cuban jazz. Reviewed at thetimes.co.uk/arts

The Coral
Sea of Mirrors
Modern Sky
★★★★☆

When the Coral stumbled into view in the early 2000s they seemed like the kind of psychedelic Scousers who would do something great before collapsing in a heap on the floor. Yet here they are two decades later, making sophisticated music that brings in touches of Ennio Morricone orchestration, baroque pop and cosmic country. *Sea of Mirrors* is an imaginary soundtrack to a spaghetti western, with instrumental interludes, tales of lonesome cowboys and bona fide leading men: Cillian Murphy and John Simm contribute. *Child of the Moon* is haunting in its beauty, *Wild Bird* has a pop economy. The whole thing has the intoxicating charm of a desert at sunset … Not bad for a bunch of stoners from the Wirral.

Various artists
A Song for Leon: A Tribute to Leon Russell
Primary Wave
★★☆☆☆



Leon Russell's mix of rock'n'roll spirit, carnival showmanship and country funk cool made him a hero to Elton John, Willie Nelson and countless others. Now Russell, *above*, gets the tribute treatment. As is so often the case with albums like this, the tributes pale in comparison to the originals they honour, not least with the Pixies massacring the honky-tonk classic *Crystal Closet Queen*. Monica Martin's *A Song for You* is beautiful, a country ballad transformed into a Billie Holiday-style torch song, but ultimately this is a good introduction to Russell in that it is a good excuse to introduce yourself to his original versions of these great songs.

James Blake
Playing Robots into Heaven
Polydor
★★★☆☆

A little over a decade ago James Blake took aspects of electronic dance music and reduced it to its essence, starting a new kind of minimalism in the process. It brought huge success, and also meant Blake went on to make much less interesting records with superstars like Kanye West. Now he has returned to his clubby roots, creating tracks via processed beats, vocal effects and a handful of samples. *Loading*, built around a sample of the Seventies smooth pop favourite Judie Tzuke, is a highlight, and for weirdness alone the ominous bleeps and dancehall chants of *Big Hammer* deserve a mention. Much of it pulses away in a digital blur, but there are flashes of the old magic here.

A classy farewell from a legendary quartet

Forty-seven years of crisply tailored but impassioned music-making from the predominantly American players of the Emerson String Quartet come to an end next month. *Infinite Voyage* is announced as the group's final album, and in six tracks they are joined by soprano Barbara Hannigan, *right*, in music chiefly from the early 20th century, when tonality was under siege.



Everyone's golden hour comes in Schoenberg's vocally enhanced String Quartet No 2. It's not usually considered easy listening, though the Emerson polish, Hannigan's penetrating beam and a vibrant recording swiftly emphasise the more beguiling aspects of a work that might wander off with Stefan George's visionary poems into the land of no key signatures but also keeps the expanded tonalities of Schoenberg's earlier string sextet, *Transfigured Night*, within reach. We also need to thank Hannigan for bringing with her an unusual and rewarding Hindemith rarity, a war-haunted song cycle, *Melancholie*.

Alone in Alban Berg's String Quartet, the Emersons (including the excellent British cellist Paul Watkins) have a harder time spreading joy in an emotionally hectic score not so clearly laid out for its instrumental forces. But the players' nuances and range of colours are still formidable.

Waving farewell to the Emersons with one hand, we welcome a new arrival with the other: the first recording ever of Ethel Smyth's early opera *Der Wald*, lacerated by critics at its German premiere in 1902, but treated much more kindly soon after at Covent Garden. John Andrews's vigorous soloists and the BBC Singers (plus BBC Symphony Orchestra) might perform it in English, but the musical language and the tragic love story's symbolic baggage remain very German. Still, Smyth's swashbuckling spirit, orchestral flair and dramatic instincts are much in evidence, and if Claire Barnett-Jones's full-tilt singing as the witch Iolanthe ultimately gets wearing, you don't get anywhere performing Ethel without lots of gusto.
Geoff Brown

classical

Emerson String Quartet/ Hannigan
Infinite Voyage
Alpha
★★★★☆

John Andrews
Der Wald
Resonus Classics
★★★☆☆

opera

Daphne

Theatre Royal Glasgow

★★★★☆

Richard Strauss's *Daphne* is the perfect opera to be performed in concert. There isn't much action and its most famous but frankly unrealisable stage direction is the requirement for the heroine to turn into a tree at the end.

So Scottish Opera made life unnecessarily difficult for themselves in the work's Scottish premiere, by going for a minimalist and rather muddled concert staging. Emma Jenkins's production jettisoned the ancient Greek setting for a Weimar-era nightclub, of which Daphne's parents appear to be the proprietors.

Stage imagery (and a programme note) links Daphne, bizarrely, to Sophie Scholl, the founder of the White Rose anti-Nazi resistance group, and Apollo is reimagined as a swaggering Nazi who struts around the stage in trenchcoat and jackboots. This makes his love for Daphne implausible, to say the least, and torpedoes Strauss's musical architecture too: Apollo's theme in the orchestral brass is meant to act like a burst of sunlight every time we hear it, but the impact is thwarted when he's a nasty, gun-toting SS man.

Consolation for the daft staging comes from a lovely cast. Hye-Youn Lee has an ideal voice for Daphne, a flexible, gorgeous soprano that captures both innocence and desperate naivety. Brad Cooper made an impressive company debut as Apollo. He has a smallish voice, but it's an exciting tenor sound; honeyed and vigorous. Shengzhi Ren sang Leukippos with beauty, if a little too much heft, and Dingle Yandell brought characteristic vigour and weight to the role of Peneios. Claire Barnett-Jones doesn't quite have the alto depth to sing Gaea, Daphne's mother, but few singers do.

Finest of all is Scottish Opera's orchestra. From the gently purling winds of the opening, to the rippling translucence of the final transformation, they sounded sensational, and their music director, Stuart Stratford, conducted them with a keen ear for balance and shape.

Simon Thompson

Usher Hall, Edinburgh, December 10

PAUL KOLNIK



Constance Stamatiou in Ronald K Brown's Dancing Spirit, which paid tribute to Judith Jamison

Moves to thrill the heart

The New York-based troupe offer a dazzling choice of delights, says Debra Craine

dance

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater

Sadler's Wells

★★★★☆

It's a little hard to get your head around the various programmes being offered by Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater in its two-week London season. That's because there are four of them and some works pop up in more than one. Never mind which you choose, though, because they all showcase a wealth of choreography and the consistently high standard of dancing from this popular New York troupe.

Robert Battle, the artistic director, introduced himself with a pair of short works in the opening programme (the evening was called *Contemporary Voices*). *Unfold* (2007) is the odder of the two, a tortured duet (urgently performed on the first night by Ashley Mayeux and Jeroboam Bozeman) that seems weirdly opposed to the recorded music, Leontyne Price singing *Depuis le jour*, the ecstatically love-drenched aria from Charpentier's opera *Louise*. Yet confusingly here on stage we see two dancers enduring what seems to be a tale of struggle and desperation.

Battle's *For Four* (2021), on the other hand, was born to please, with a quartet of dancers flying through a fleet and sparky display of cheeky jazz set to music by the trumpeter Wynton Marsalis. The four dancers exhibit heaps of personality along with exceptional agility and precise technique as they dart across the stage with glee. It's as if the crotchets and quavers of Marsalis's music have leapt from the page to the stage.

The second programme (branded *Modern Masters*) had to be rearranged because of illness. So we didn't get Twyla Tharp's *Roy's Joys*, but we did see Ronald K Brown's *Dancing Spirit* (2009, restaged 2023), in which he celebrates the power of dance and pays tribute to Judith Jamison, who ran the Ailey company for more than 20 years. Nine dancers give themselves over to the music (Duke Ellington, Marsalis, Radiohead and War) and the moves, which take their cue from Cuba, Africa and American modern dance. From quietly statuesque beginnings to a propulsive, buoyant finale, Brown's creation is part spiritual, part ritual — physically vibrant and wholly engaging.

Elsewhere, look out for Kyle Abraham's sensuous love essay *Are You in Your Feelings?* (reviewed in Edinburgh last month) and Alvin Ailey's *Revelations* (1960), a barnstorming ode to joy and salvation that evokes the African-American experience of his churchgoing Texas childhood.

To September 16, sadlerswells.com

pop

Arlo Parks

3Olympia Theatre, Dublin

★★★★☆

Four songs in, Arlo Parks was already storming the barricades. The LA-based Londoner jumped off stage towards a scrum of young, emotional fans. She was halfway through *Caroline,* a wistful ballad about a rowing couple from her Mercury-winning 2021 debut album, *Collapsed in Sunbeams*, told from the perspective of someone observing them from a passing bus. The tune's dreamy, diaristic quality showed the 23-year-old at her best. Drowsy beats pushed against her soft, soulful voice.

Parks was open and earnest as she kicked off her new tour with a gripping and cathartic performance. She confessed early on to first-night jitters. "I've been a little bit nervous," she explained during a set dominated by tracks from her second LP, *My Soft Machine*. The record is bigger and beefier than *Sunbeams* and a Top Ten hit (though snubbed by the Mercury judges). It also pulls off the deft feat of celebrating the joy of new love without slipping into insufferable gooeyness.

Parks is in a relationship with the American rapper Ashnikko. The romance has provided an anchor for an artist who has spoken frankly about her depression, which is the theme of her early hit *Black Dog* — a gust of chilly bedroom pop that arrived towards the end of the gig. "My chest is buzzing like a bluebird caged," she half-sang, half-rapped in the molten trip-hop of *Impurities*, painting romantic infatuation as a hallucinatory experience. It was emo for people who can quote Sylvia Plath in their sleep.

Just before the encore, she cut loose in earnest. Strapping on a guitar, Parks, backed by a smiley four-piece band, plunged into the Fontaines DC-esque tumult of *Devotion*. She thrashed about, her red buzzcut catching the light. Her new album celebrates finding stability in an uncertain world, but as she threw herself around, Parks was capturing the sheer, gory thrill of losing yourself in the moment.

Ed Power

Touring to September 28

theatre

Never Have I Ever

Minerva, Chichester

★★★★☆

No, it's not particularly subtle. Deborah Frances-White's debut play, a broad comedy for our fractious times, is written in brash primary colours and turns on the most improbable offer of money for sexual favours since that Hollywood potboiler *Indecent Proposal*. Never mind. This is a blessedly rare example of a play that doesn't simply regurgitate conventional wisdoms about race, gender and class. Frances-White, host of the podcast *The Guilty Feminist*, dares to think forbidden thoughts.

We are introduced to two interracial couples, old friends from university. Jacq and Kas, owners of a chichi restaurant in east London that faces bankruptcy, have invited Adaego and the suave, slightly older Tobin for one last dinner on the premises in order to break the news. Since Tobin, right-on head of a "sustainable" hedge fund, has sunk more than £100,000 of his own money into the venture, there's tension in the air.

But Tobin, it transpires, is so wealthy that he isn't particularly bothered. What does get under his skin is the revelation, disclosed during the drinking game that gives the play its title, that the others indulged in a threesome during their student days. Outraged, he seeks justice. How? By offering Jacq a small fortune to allow him to pleasure her. Will she succumb to temptation?

If, at this point, the scenario seems madly overcooked, the script stirs in more spice. Adaego is a self-satisfied black activist-journalist from a comfortable background who blathers on about her networking skills. Bisexual Jacq is a working-class survivor of a "stabby" council estate. As more wine is drunk, Kas, diplomatic to a fault, tries to keep the peace, Tobin dips into his supply of cocaine and the cosy gathering becomes a check-your-privilege contest.



Alex Roach and Amit Shah

Frances-White namechecks George Bernard Shaw in her programme note, so it shouldn't come as a surprise to find that her characters are all prone to speechifying. But there are some richly comic exchanges too. If Tobin, Jacq and Adaego all have their egregious traits, we glimpse their vulnerabilities as well.

The cast handle the emotional twists with aplomb. Greg Wise (Lord Mountbatten in *The Crown*) is oleaginous as Tobin. Alex Roach brings an acid edge to Jacq, Susan Wokoma gives Adaego human depth, while Amit Shah brings real passion to Kas's call to be treated as an individual, not a member of a minority group.

Emma Butler's direction could be dialled down several notches. Yet as the couples bicker in the designer Frankie Bradshaw's sleek restaurant, you still want to eavesdrop and take sides. This is a drama that will send you out into the night, arguing and laughing.

Clive Davis

To September 30, cft.org.uk

first night

theatre

God of Carnage
Lyric Hammersmith, W6
★★☆☆☆

Yasmina Reza's play about two sets of parents who meet up because of an issue between their children needs crack comic performances if it's not to turn into a shouty ding-dong of ill-concealed grievances and blatant hypocrisy. A stage hit in London and New York in 2008, it then became the Roman Polanski film *Carnage* in 2011. And if it was less subtle than Reza's superhit *Art*, its teasing transgressions still made it a vigorously funny takedown of haute-bourgeois pretences.

In 2023 the appeal is harder to fathom. Freema Agyeman (Martha Jones from *Doctor Who*) plays the writer Veronica, who hosts Alan (Ariyon Bakare), a hotshot lawyer who is always on his phone, and his wife Annette (Dinita Gohil), who is in "wealth management". Veronica and her wholesaler husband Michael (Martin Hutson) want to move on from the dispute between their 11-year-olds: their son Bruno had two of his teeth knocked out by their guests' boy Ferdinand. Alan and Annette should just admit Ferdinand did wrong and move on, right?

Ah, but as Veronica's clafoutis gets shared passive-aggressively and Michael's rum gets poured excessively, the thin veneer of what passes for reasonable rubs away. "How many parents standing up for their children become infantile themselves?" Annette asks, and that's about the size of it. The comedy should delight because of the gears it slides between: from friendly to frosty, affable to aggressive, smiling to sarky, genial to judgmental. Each outwardly civilised state should contain the shadow of its hostile cousin. It should be a clusterbomb of subtext.

Everything is too close to the surface to be much fun in Nicholai La Barrie's production, though. Without a sense of two real relationships at play, all four performers batter the comedy into submission. It's like *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* rendered with old-school sitcom overkill. Voices are raised, arms are aloft, there is little tension to toy with, so it's hard to care what happens to Veronica's art catalogue or Alan's phone.

The satirical barbs count for little when you are longing for the guests to go home. A fizzy comedy falls flat.

Dominic Maxwell

To September 30, lyric.co.uk

CAROLA VAN WIJK/RIJKSMUSEUM, AMSTERDAM



Jan Jansz Mostaert's Portrait of African Man, c 1525-30

Art, guilt and the slave trade

This exhibition probes complex history with mixed results, says Tomiwa Owolade

exhibition

Black Atlantic: Power, People, Resistance
Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge
★★★☆☆

In what ways did the transatlantic slave trade shape the museums of Cambridge? This is the question proposed in this show. The curators are keen to emphasise that the exhibition is not about attaching individual blame and that it's not about guilt. It is instead about improving our knowledge of the relationship between the slave trade and works of art. They go some way towards doing that.

Between 1500 and 1900 more than 12 million enslaved Africans were transported to the New World by European colonies. This exhibition curates paintings and objects associated with that history. It features the earliest serving depiction of a black person in European fine art, *Portrait of African Man* by Jan Jansz Mostaert (c1525-30); gold weights from the Akan people of west Africa used to measure their native currency; wood sculptures from the Caribbean. All of this is fascinating: tangible portals to an otherwise largely obscure past.

The most striking works in the exhibition are by the Dutch painters. In 1816 the Anglo-Irish aristocrat Richard Fitzwilliam founded the Fitzwilliam Museum; Matthew Decker, his maternal grandfather, was a wealthy Dutch merchant and a founding director of the South Sea Company. He collected a large number of Dutch paintings, many of which formed the founding collection of the Fitzwilliam. Dirk Valkenburg's *Ritual Party of Enslaved People on a Sugar Plantation in Suriname* is excellent. It is a depiction of an enslaved community: men, women and children. It is vivid, textured and sensuous.

> **"There are tangible portals to an otherwise obscure past**

Sadly *Black Atlantic* is not free of the kind of jarring didacticism that mars so many of our exhibitions — especially when it comes to the issue of race and empire. Near a self-portrait artwork called *Ifá* by the Afro-French artist Alexis Peskine, which is made up of nails and other items, there is a large text that looks like the words of a spoken-word poem.

Written by Peskine, he sounds less like an artist and more like a self-aggrandising activist: "I come from a long, long line of strong, creative and beautiful people who survived despite the despicable crimes inflicted on them by hateful individuals whose feeble consciences were easily swayed by inhumanity, bigotry and greed." It goes on and on in this vein.

It is impossible to completely divorce politics from art that emerged from, or is in conversation with, the exploitation and subjugation of black people. Any exhibition that seeks to explore this topic and impart knowledge to the general public will have some political dimension to it. But being morally lectured to in an art exhibition is a trial.

To January 7, fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk

proms

Rufus Wainwright
Royal Albert Hall
★★★★☆

Rufus Wainwright's music, persona, his very essence — it all lends itself to the symphonic treatment. This is a man who has written two operas and recreated Judy Garland's legendary 1961 concert at Carnegie Hall, so performing his classic 2003 and 2004 albums *Want One* and *Want Two* in full, backed by the BBC Concert Orchestra conducted by Sarah Hicks, must have been a dream come true.

Or maybe a nightmare. "The lyric sheet is blank," he fretted as he sat at a grand piano. He shouldn't have worried. Either the words came back to him or the lyric sheet reappeared because Wainwright got into his stride and turned his best albums, a blend of personal revelation, musical theatre pizzazz and baroque flourish, into material for a rich and involving concert.

Dressed in sparkling slippers and a feather brooch that he let slip was a gift from Helena Bonham Carter, he began with the cri de coeur *Oh What a World*, on which he not only marvelled at a world where straight men read fashion magazines but also asked: "Why am I always on a plane or a fast train? Oh what a world my parents gave me."

Those parents were the folk singers Loudon Wainwright III and Kate McGarrigle, and they cropped up elsewhere in the concert. *Dinner at Eight* documented a disastrous evening with his father that almost ended in a fight, coining *Want One*'s themes of alienation, identity and Wainwright trying to make sense of himself and his place in the world.

It wasn't just the confessional tone that brought the concert alive, though. The harmony-rich music, with its shades of the Beatles and Elton John, had the depth to handle interpretation by fluttering woodwind, swooping strings and bold brass. Motifs from the songs, including *Oh What a World*'s quoting from Ravel's *Boléro*, formed an introduction, and as the concert unfolded, the emotion at the heart of it all made itself felt.

A separate concert for *Want Two* followed later in the evening — and this vast and ornate space, complete with an orchestra to bring his great creation to life, really did seem like Wainwright's spiritual home.

Will Hodgkinson

On BBC Sounds

Win the ultimate literary trip to Cheltenham

The Cheltenham Literature Festival will be back from October 6 to October 15, featuring the world's foremost writers, thinkers and performers. Times+ members have the chance to win a luxury stay at The Queens Hotel Cheltenham, festival tickets and afternoon tea with a selection of our writers.



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Boy meets girl, again, but this time with a twist

Carol Midgley
TV review



The Lovers
Sky Atlantic/Now
★★★★☆

Helping Our Teens
BBC2
★★★☆☆

'Posh boy falls for working-class girl" is hardly a new premise for a rom-com. But **The Lovers** at least can't be described as twee and cutesy given that when our protagonists met, she was about to blow her brains out with a shotgun. That was a very promising start — depressed Belfast supermarket worker about to die by suicide accidentally saving the life of a privileged TV politics presenter from London being chased by angry local youths. He in turn stops her pulling the trigger. "Opposites attract" is as old as the hills but the writing here is sharp and witty, and the performances of Roisin Gallagher as Janet and Johnny Flynn as Seamus pretty much spot on, each having funny bones in their own way.

Probably the biggest strength of *The Lovers* is the writer David Ireland's ear for dialogue and his witty observations. She refers to female masturbation as "slapping your kebab"; he claims his posh actress girlfriend Frankie (Alice Eve) can't possibly be a snob because "she's good friends with Ken Loach".

Janet might not move in the same circles as, or even recognise, Seamus but her withering put-downs and his well-spoken faux pas land convincingly. She says he isn't as famous as Stacey Solomon, he says reality TV (which she watches) is for morons who'd be "better off shooting themselves in the f***ing face". Which, of course, she nearly did. Good gallows humour. The laughs (OK, smiles) are pretty frequent, improving as the characters bed in (I've seen three episodes). It does get a bit *Love Actually* but those moments pass pretty quickly. It's very nicely done.

Whenever I watch a school-based documentary I always have the same thought: I could never be a teacher. I just don't have the patience. **Helping Our Teens** (lame title alert!), set in Beacon Hill Academy in Dudley, was no exception. Teaching classrooms full of hormonal pupils seemed hard labour enough to me. But teachers also have to grapple with the teenagers' complex mental health needs, even more so since lockdown. It seemed the teachers were frequently told to "f*** off" for their trouble.



Johnny Flynn and Roisin Gallagher portray a mismatched couple

The two girls on which this episode focused had different issues. Jayliyah, in year 10, had been excluded from her previous school and seemed angry, unhappy, obstreperous. The term oppositional defiant disorder was mooted, although the less patient might call it something else. The behaviour expert Maria Gentles noted that Jayliyah's attention-seeking from teachers was actually "attachment-seeking". It was moving when she confided that she had been "dropped" by her friends at her previous school and beaten up in the toilets.

Even more moving was when Taylor, in year 11, opened up about the reasons behind her depression and suicidal thoughts, which left her shaking in tears. In quick succession she had seen her parents separate, her beloved grandfather die, her grandmother die and her sister be diagnosed with MS. Poor child.

What I haven't seen yet is much discussion of how lockdown had exacerbated their problems. Maybe part two, next week, will elaborate.

Radio choice
Ben Dowell



Heart and Soul
World Service, 11.30am

What happens when a nun in Poland chooses to leave her religious community? This edition of *Heart and Soul*, titled *Poland's Nuns Lifting the Veil*, is made by Orla O'Brien, who left her religious community after she reported historical sexual abuse by a priest. The programme speaks to the former nun Izabela Moscicka, who is now living independently in Krakow, where she has set up a centre for nuns and former nuns who are looking for assistance and refuge. This programme finds that many of them are rejecting their orders and speaking out about their treatment.

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Times Radio
Digital, web, smart speaker, app
5.00am Rosie Wright with Early Breakfast **6.00** Chloe Tilley and Calum Macdonald with Times Radio Breakfast **10.00** Matt Chorley. An insider's take on politics **1.00pm** Ruth Davidson. Covering the big political stories of the week, and looking ahead to the weekend, especially in sport and entertainment **4.00** Cathy Newman with Times Radio Drive. Friday's headlines and discussions **7.00** Ed Vaizey. The Conservative peer sits in bringing his take on the day's news **10.00** Henry Bonsu **1.00am** Stories of Our Times **1.30** Red Box **2.00** Highlights from Times Radio

Radio 2
FM: 88-90.2 MHz
6.30am The Zoe Ball Breakfast Show. With guests Nicole Scherzinger, Davina McCall and Jim Kerr **9.30** Vernon Kay. Cathy Dennis chooses her final Tracks of My Years **12.00** Jeremy Vine **2.00pm** Scott Mills **3.30** Scott Mills' Wonder Years **4.00** Sara Cox **7.00** Michelle Visage **8.30** Michelle Visage's Handbag Hits. Feelgood party classics, featuring Pharrell Williams, Whitney Houston, Cyndi Lauper and others **9.00** The Good Groove with DJ Spoony **11.00** The Rock Show with Johnnie Walker. A selection of rock tracks, and Queens Park Rangers head coach Gareth Ainsworth nominates his Rock God **12.00** Romesh Ranganathan: For the Love of Hip-Hop **1.00am** My Life in a Mixtape **3.00** Radio 2 Unwinds with Angela Griffin **4.00** Sophie Ellis-Bextor

Radio 3
FM: 90.2-92.4 MHz
6.30am Breakfast
Featuring classical music requested by listeners. Presented by Petroc Trelawny
9.00 Essential Classics
Georgia Mann plays the best in classical music, featuring new discoveries, some musical surprises and familiar favourites
12.00 Composer of the Week: Handel (1685-1759)
Kate Molleson invites listeners to 18th-century London's classiest al fresco venue for an explosive premiere. Handel (*Music for the Royal Fireworks — VI. Menuet II; Hornpipe compos'd for Vauxhall; Acis and Galatea — Hush ye pretty warbling quire; Semele — Where'er you walk*; Concerto Grosso in F major, Op 3 No 4b; *Zadok the Priest* and a selection from *Music for the Royal Fireworks*)
1.00pm Radio 3 Lunchtime Concert
A performance by multi-award winning pianist Jean-Efflam Bavouzet recorded at LSO St Luke's in September 2021. Presented by Hannah French. Haydn (Sonata in A flat No.31, Hob. XVI/46); Clementi (Sonata in A major, Op.50 No.1) and Liszt (*Grosses Konzert* solo — *concerto pathétique*) (r)
2.00 Afternoon Concert
Penny Gore rounds off this week of afternoons with the Boston Symphony Orchestra's recent appearance at the BBC Proms recorded on Sunday August 25. R. Strauss (*Der Rosenkavalier*, Concert Suite for Orchestra — *Tempo di valse*; *Death and Transfiguration* and *Morgen!*, op. 27/4); Coleridge-Taylor (*Serenade —Fantasiestücke*, Op 5 No 2); Purcell (*Hear My Prayer, o Lord*); Julia Adolphe (*Makeshift Castle* – European premiere) and Prokofiev (Symphony No. 5 in B flat major)(r)
4.30 The Listening Service
Tom Service examines Mozart's *Requiem*, the composer's final masterpiece (r)
5.00 In Tune
Music and arts news
6.00 Live BBC Proms 2023
BBC CO and conductor Anna-Maria Helsing, live from the Hippodrome Circus. Presented by Ian Skelly. Vaughan Williams (Overture — *The Wasps* and *The Lark Ascending*); Coates (*Dancing Nights — Concert Valse*); Sarah Rodgers (*Seascapes* — BBC commission, world premiere); Walton (*Crown Imperial*); Stravinsky (*Circus Polka*) and Rodgers (*Carousel Waltz*)
7.30 Live BBC Proms 2023
Domingo Hindoyan conducts the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra with soloist Nobuyuki Tsujii, live from the Royal Albert Hall. Plus, part two of the concert recorded earlier this evening from the Hippodrome Circus, Great Yarmouth. Honegger (*Rugby*); Rachmaninov (Piano Concerto No. 3 in D minor); Gabriela Ortiz (*Clara* — UK premiere); Leonard Bernstein (*Symphonic Dances* from *West Side Story*); Andrea Tarrodi (*Festive Overture*); Jimmy Lopez (*Fiesta!* for symphony orchestra) and Khachaturian (*Masquerade Suite*)
11.00 Late Junction
Jennifer Lucy Allan continues a month-long celebration of the cassette tape with a new commission from Aki Onda. Plus, the performance artist, musician and writer Cosey Fanni Tutti shares some of her own most treasured cassette memories
1.00am Ultimate Calm (r)
2.00 Happy Harmonies with Laufey (r)
3.00 Through the Night (r)

Radio 4
FM: 92.4-94.6 MHz LW: 198kHz MW: 720 kHz
5.30am News Briefing
5.43 Prayer for the Day
5.45 Farming Today
5.58 Tweet of the Day (r)
6.00 Today
With Martha Kearney and Katya Adler
8.31 (LW) Yesterday in Parliament
9.00 The Reunion
In the 200th episode, Kirsty Wark reunites the team behind *Spitting Image* (4/5) (r)
9.45 (LW) Daily Service
9.45 Book of the Week: Invitation to a Banquet — The Story of Chinese Food
By Fuschia Dunlop (5/5)
10.00 Woman's Hour
Presented by Anita Rani
11.00 The Briefing Room
With David Aaronovitch (12/18)
11.30 What's Funny About
The inside story of the biggest comedies seen on television over the years (2/6)
12.01pm (LW) Shipping Forecast
12.04 AntiSocial
The issues of the day, presented by Adam Fleming. Last in the series
1.00 The World at One
1.45 The Immortals
Finding a drug that treats ageing (5/10)
2.00 The Archers (r)
2.15 Drama: There's Something I Need to Tell You
By John Scott Dryden and Misha Kawnel. The global thriller concludes, touching on Istanbul, a Russian oligarch — and his superyacht. With Chris Lew Kum Hoi (5/5)
2.45 Helen Lewis: Great Wives
A reflection on the life and times of American philanthropist Joan Kroc. (4/4)
3.00 Gardeners' Question Time
From Charlton Adam, Somerset
3.45 Short Works
Still Life with Fruit, by Jon McGregor. Read by Penelope Wilton
4.00 Last Word
Obituary series
4.30 More or Less
Numbers used in everyday life (2/6) (r)
5.00 PM
5.54 (LW) Shipping Forecast
6.00 Six O'Clock News
6.30 The News Quiz
Topical comedy panel game (1/8)
7.00 The Archers
Pip has something to get off her chest
7.15 Screenshot
Ellen E Jones and Mark Kermode explore the lovers on the run genre (5/9)
8.00 Any Questions?
Alex Forsyth presents debate from Skegness Grammar School in Lincolnshire with a panel including Sir John Hayes MP, Dame Diana Johnson MP and Christina McAnea
8.50 A Point of View
A reflection on a topical issue
9.00 The Immortals Omnibus
1-5/10. Programmes detailing Silicon Valley's search for a cure for ageing
10.00 The World Tonight
News round-up with Shaun Ley
10.45 Book at Bedtime: The Exhibitionist
By Charlotte Mendelson (5/10)
11.00 Americast
Analysis of social stories breaking in the US
11.30 Today in Parliament
12.00 News and Weather
12.30am Book of the Week: Invitation to a Banquet — The Story of Chinese Food (r)
12.48 Shipping Forecast
1.00 As BBC World Service

Radio 4 Extra
Digital only
8.00am Marriage Lines **8.30** Sketches by Boz **9.00** Whispers **9.30** The Great Pursuit **10.00** Moonbeam and Mrs Pat **11.00** Strong Poison **11.30** Berkely Mather — The Hard Buy **12.00** Underland **12.15pm** Love Henry James: What Maisie Knew **12.30** The Break **1.00** Marriage Lines **1.30** Sketches by Boz **2.00** Whispers **2.30** The Great Pursuit **3.00** Moonbeam and Mrs Pat **4.00** Strong Poison **4.30** Berkely Mather — The Hard Buy **5.00** Underland **5.15** Love Henry James: What Maisie Knew **5.30** The Break **6.00** Marriage Lines **6.30** Sketches by Boz **7.00** Whispers. Panel game hosted by Gyles Brandreth **7.30** The Great Pursuit. By Tom Sharpe **8.00** As the Curtain Falls. Marie-Louise Muir explores 25 years of Signature Theatre company **8.30** A Good Read. Marian Keyes and Nikki Bedi talk about their favourite books **9.00** The Curious Cases of Rutherford & Fry. (2/2) The properties of water **9.30** Eye of the Cricket. Crime thriller, by James Sallis **10.00** Comedy Club: Whatever Happened to Baby Jane Austen? By David Quantick. Florence becomes obsessed with Selina's old movies **10.30** Beauty of Britain. By Christopher Douglas and Nicola Sanderson **11.00** 2000 Years of Radio. The end of the world threatens to interrupt a broadcast in 499AD **11.15** Steven Appleby's Normal Life. Comedy with Paul McCrink **11.30** Listen Against. Seven days of radio from 2010

Radio 5 Live
MW: 693, 909
5.00am Wake Up to Money **6.00** 5 Live Breakfast **9.00** Nicky Campbell **11.00** Chiles on Friday **1.00pm** Rugby World Cup Top Tens **1.30** Defoe & Deeney Football Firsts **2.00** Elis James and John Robins **4.00** 5 Live Drive **7.00** Rugby World Cup **8.00** Live Rugby World Cup: France v New Zealand **10.15** Stephen Nolan **1.00am** Graham Liver

talkSPORT
MW: 1053, 1089 kHz
5.00am Early Breakfast **6.00** Alan Brazil **10.00** Jim White and Simon Jordan **1.00pm** Hawksbee and Jacobs **4.00** talkSPORT Drive with Andy Goldstein and Darren Bent **7.00** GameDay Countdown **10.00** Sports Bar **1.00am** Extra Time with Martin Kelner

TalkRadio
Digital only
5.00am Breakfast Show **6.30** David Bull **9.30** Mike and Kev **10.00** The Independent Republic of Mike Graham **1.00pm** Peter Cardwell **3.00** Kevin O'Sullivan **5.00** Early Evening Show **7.00** Plank of the Week **8.00** Friday Night with Nadine **9.00** The Best of Piers Morgan Uncensored **10.00** The Royal Tea **10.30** What Just Happened? **11.00** Andre Walker **1.00am** Martin Kelner

6 Music
Digital only
5.00am Chris Hawkins **7.30** Nemone **10.30** Mary Anne Hobbs **1.00pm** Craig Charles **4.00** Steve Lamacq **7.00** The People's Party with Afrodeutsche **9.00** 6 Music's Indie Forever **11.00** The Ravers Hour **12.00** Rave Forever **1.00am** Emo Forever **2.00** Focus Beats **4.00** Ambient Focus

Virgin Radio
Digital only
6.30am The Chris Evans Breakfast Show with cinch **10.00** Eddy Temple-Morris **1.00pm** Jayne Middlemiss **4.00** Ricky Wilson **7.00** Ben Jones **10.00** Rich Williams

Classic FM
FM: 100-102 MHz
6.00am More Music Breakfast **9.00** Alexander Armstrong **12.00** Lucy Coward **4.00pm** Margherita Taylor **7.00** Smooth Classics at Seven **10.00** Calm Classics **1.00am** Katie Breathwick **4.00** Sam Pittis

television & radio

Viewing Guide
James Jackson

Live Rugby World Cup: France v New Zealand
ITV1, 6.45pm

Top pick

The hotly anticipated Rugby World Cup opens with a blockbuster clash. What better way to get the tournament started than a collision between France, at home, and New Zealand, who have taken home the Webb Ellis Cup three times? Since the first World Cup in 1987, these two giants of rugby have kept up a healthy rivalry. In particular, there was that 1999 World Cup semi-final classic. French fans remember that game at Twickenham as one of their greatest victories, when French flair overturned the favourites in a 43-31 win. Being held in Saint-Denis, this game (kick-off at 8.15pm) should be full of sporting atmosphere. Mark Pougatch will be leading ITV's presenting team from an augmented-reality studio in the UK, alongside Jill Douglas, who will host coverage from France along with David Flatman and Hugh Woozencroft. Analysis comes from a pundit line-up including Jonny Wilkinson, Maggie Alphonsi, Brian O'Driscoll, Clive Woodward, Gareth Thomas and Lawrence Dallaglio. Tellingly, a former referee, JP Doyle, will be around to unpick the rulings and flashpoints. For the BBC's part, Radio 5 Live and its Sounds app will have coverage on the radio. England get their campaign going tomorrow against Argentina, and Scotland and Wales start on Sunday against South Africa and Fiji respectively.

The Changeling
Apple TV+

Any new drama series that doesn't involve troubled cops or fantasy heroes deserves an audience, and this one is certainly original. Based on the bestseller by Victor LaValle, it is billed as a fairytale for grown-ups — part parenthood fable, part New York horror. In a nutshell, it follows a guy named Apollo, how he meets the love of his life, how they become parents … and how his wife then starts to behave very strangely indeed. Is it postnatal depression or does it have something to do with a curse put on her by an old lady in Brazil? The series sucks you in as things get worse for Apollo.

Early

BBC1
6.00am Breakfast **9.15** Morning Live. Magazine show **10.00** Critical Incident. The National Police Air Service face danger in the skies. Last in the series **10.45** Expert Witness. A forensic archaeologist helps catch the killer of a woman. Last in the series **11.15** Homes Under the Hammer. Properties in West Bromwich, Gawthorpe and Lowestoft (r) (AD) **12.15pm** Bargain Hunt. Roo Irvine heads to an antiques fair in Detling, Kent **1.00** BBC News at One; Weather **1.30** BBC Regional News; Weather **1.45** Five Bedrooms. A half-baked plan to become Manju's carer proves to be Liz's undoing **2.30** Money for Nothing. A handmade sideboard and two bedside tables are revived **3.00** Escape to the Country. Jules Hudson crosses the Solent to go property shopping on the Isle of Wight with a couple who have a £750,000 budget (r) (AD) **3.45** Garden Rescue. Charlie Dimmock and Lee Burkhill are in Fareham to create a relaxing garden for a family that will suit the whole family and be inspired by their travels **4.30** The Finish Line. Quiz hosted by Roman Kemp and Sarah Greene **5.15** Pointless. Quiz hosted by Alexander Armstrong and Konnie Huq **6.00** BBC News at Six; Weather **6.30** BBC Regional News; Weather

BBC2
6.15am Homes Under the Hammer (r) **7.15** Money for Nothing (r) **8.00** Sign Zone: Gardeners' World (r) (SL) **9.00** Nicky Campbell **10.00** BBC News **12.15pm** Politics UK **1.00** Impossible. Quiz hosted by Rick Edwards (r) **1.45** Eggheads. Quiz show hosted by Jeremy Vine (r) **2.15** Murder, Mystery and My Family. Jeremy Dein and Sasha Wass investigate a notorious arsenic poisoning from 1921 (r) (AD) **3.00** The Wonder of Animals. How the brain of the great ape has evolved (r) (AD) **3.30** Back in Time for the Factory. The real-life stories of the Welsh factory women who inspired the programme (r) (AD) **4.30** Great British Railway Journeys. Michael Portillo visits the University of Glasgow's Officer Training Corps (r) (AD) **5.00** Flog It! In St Albans, Hertfordshire, Claire Rawle discovers an Arts and Crafts bowl that may have belonged to George Bernard Shaw's wife (r) **6.00** Richard Osman's House of Games. Jen Brister, Kelvin Fletcher, Ian Moore and Zoe Williams take part (r) **6.30** Marcus Wareing's Tales from a Kitchen Garden. The chef visits the nearby Buckhurst estate to learn about traditional Sussex cattle, looks into pond management, and investigates how to encourage more wildlife onto the farm

ITV1
6.00am Good Morning Britain **9.00** Lorraine. Entertainment and fashion news. Presented by Lorraine Kelly **10.00** This Morning. Daily magazine, featuring a mix of celebrity chat, showbusiness news and lifestyle features. Including Local Weather **12.30pm** Loose Women. Celebrity interviews and topical debate from a female perspective **1.30** ITV News; Weather **1.55** Regional News; Weather **2.00** James Martin's Spanish Adventure. The chef visits Santiago De Compostela, meets pilgrims, explores the local market, tries lampreys, visits a bakery to try Tarta de Santiago, and takes a mussel boat tour (AD) **3.00** Lingo. Taking part on the quiz show are couple from Worcestershire, a pair from Wiltshire and a mother and son who also hail from Wiltshire. Adil Ray hosts (r) **4.00** Tipping Point. Ben Shephard hosts the arcade-themed quiz in which contestants drop tokens down a choice of four chutes in the hope of winning a £10,000 jackpot **5.00** The Chase. Bradley Walsh presents as four more contestants answer general knowledge questions and work as a team to take on one of the ruthless Chasers and secure a cash prize **6.00** Regional News; Weather **6.15** ITV News; Weather

Channel 4
6.05am Countdown. Rick Edwards is in Dictionary Corner (r) **6.45** Cheers (r) **7.35** Everybody Loves Raymond (r) (AD) **8.25** Frasier (r) (AD) **9.55** Château DIY (r) (AD) **10.55** George Clarke's Amazing Spaces. A Yorkshire couple plan to transform a goods wagon into a gin bar (r) (AD) **11.55** Channel 4 News Summary **12.00** Steph's Packed Lunch. Weekday magazine show hosted by Steph McGovern **2.10pm** Countdown. With Rick Edwards in Dictionary Corner **3.00** A Place in the Sun. A couple seek a holiday home in southern France (r) **4.00** A Place in the Sun. Laura Hamilton helps two sisters from Nottingham find their dream holiday home in and around Spain's Mijas Costa **5.00** Four in a Bed. The guest house owners meet up to settle some scores (r) **5.30** Come Dine with Me. A business developer hosts the final dinner party in Manchester (r) **6.00** The Simpsons. Fearing Doomsday is coming, Mr Burns gets Dr Frink to test everyone to see who is worth saving — and the results are a major shock to the Simpson family (r) (AD) **6.30** Hollyoaks. Mercedes and Warren are there to support each other, Darren calls in help from Scott to talk to Charlie, and Dave and Sam show their support for Lizzie's event (r) (AD)

Channel 5
6.00am Milkshake! **9.15** Jeremy Vine. The broadcaster and guests discuss the issues of the day with co-host Storm Huntley joining him for phone-ins and reading out viewers' correspondence **11.15** Storm Huntley. Debate on the day's talking points continues **12.40pm** Alexis Conran. The actor, writer and broadcaster examines the important stories of the day **1.40** 5 News at Lunchtime **1.45** Home and Away. Kirby walks out on Leah, vowing to quit her job at the Diner. Theo, Justin and Leah agree that they have all made a bad situation worse (r) (AD) **2.15** **FILM: Cradle Did Fall (PG, TVM, 2021)** A woman invites a photographer to her house to take pictures of her baby, and the two form a friendship, but the mother suspects the photographer drugged her and was planning to steal her child. Thriller starring Ali Liebert and Lauren K Robek **4.00** The Cruise: Fun-Loving Brits at Sea. The three groups visit the Greek island of Mykonos, where a mother and son head straight to the aptly named Paradise Beach (AD) **5.00** 5 News at 5 **6.00** Susan Calman's Grand Day Out. The comedian climbs the spectacular peaks of north Wales, and stops off at the must-see tourist spot of the Tu Hwnt Ir Bont Tearoom (r) **6.55** 5 News Update



Evening

BBC1
7.00 **The One Show** Presented by Alex Jones and Lauren Laverne

7.30 **Our Lives: Our Sea Forest** The efforts of a free diver to restore and then protect a kelp forest off the Sussex coast. *See Viewing Guide* (AD)

8.00 **Question of Sport** A look back at highlights of the past 12 months on the quiz show. Last in the series

8.30 **Would I Lie to You?** Loyiso Gola, Sophie Ellis-Bextor, Jason Manford and Briony May Williams guest on the comedy panel show (3/12) (r)

9.00 **Celebrity MasterChef** In the final, the three remaining contestants must cook and present a three-course meal for the judges. Last in the series (AD)

9.30 **Mrs Brown's Boys** New series. Agnes is feeling down in the dumps as she cannot seem to get any sleep. *See Viewing Guide* (AD)

10.00 **BBC News at Ten**

10.30 **BBC Regional News and Weather**

10.40 **Starstruck** Jessie and Tom reconnect, but she has to decide if pursuing an old flame is a good idea (3/6) (r) (AD)

11.00 **Starstruck** Jessie and her friends enjoy a weekend in the countryside, but tension in the group rises when Ian blurts out a secret (4/6) (r) (AD)

11.25 **Relic (15, 2020)** Premiere. Three generations of the same family are haunted by a presence that is taking over a woman's mind. Mystery starring Emily Mortimer and Robyn Nevin

12.55am-6.00 BBC News

BBC2
7.00 **Live Athletics: Diamond League Brussels** The Memorial Van Damme. Coverage of the 13th and penultimate meeting of the campaign, held at King Baudouin Stadium in Belgium. Jake Wightman was the sole British winner here last year in the 800m, but he has been ruled out of the current season due to a foot injury. There was also a fine win for Ireland's Ciara Mageean here in 2022, claiming victory in the 1500m in a national record of 3:56.63

9.00 **Gardeners' World** Monty Don plants bulbs in pots, including hyacinths and daffodils, and Toby Buckland discovers an eco-home in Rye that has been cleverly designed to incorporate a unique garden, with wildlife in mind

10.00 **Red Dwarf** Lister sits the chef's exam in an attempt to get a promotion to a rank above Rimmer (3/6) (r)

10.30 **Newsnight** With Kirsty Wark

11.05 **No Activity** Stokes has had to go back to the station for a chat about the shooting incident, so Hendy is joined by an American detective (5/6) (r)

11.30 **ODI Cricket Highlights** England v New Zealand. Action from the first game in the four-match series, held at Sophia Gardens in Cardiff

12.30am Murder Trial: The Disappearance of Renee and Andrew MacRae The series takes a look at the testimony of Renee's best friend (r) (AD) **1.30** The Hidden World of Hospitality with Tom Kerridge (r) (AD) **2.30** Sign Zone: Teenage Vaping: What's the Harm? — Panorama (r) (SL) **3.00-3.25** Couples Therapy (r) (SL)

ITV1
6.45 **Live Rugby World Cup 2023: France v New Zealand** (Kick-off **8.15**). Mark Pougatch presents all the action from the opening match of the tournament, as the Pool A rivals meet at Stade de France in Paris. The hosts reached the quarter-finals four years ago in Japan and will be expecting a strong showing this time around in front of their own fans. However, they begin their tournament with arguably the toughest possible fixture, as the All Blacks go into the tournament as favourites to lift the trophy despite losing out to England in the semi-finals in 2019. With analysis from Jonny Wilkinson, Brian O'Driscoll and Maggie Alphonsi, reports by Jill Douglas, Bryan Habana, Sean Fitzpatrick and Benjamin Kayser, and commentary by Miles Harrison, Ben Kay and Jamie Roberts. *See Viewing Guide*

10.35 **ITV News**

11.10 **Regional News**

11.25 **The Queen (12, 2006)** Fact-based drama about how the royal family and Tony Blair dealt with the aftermath of Princess Diana's death. With Helen Mirren, Michael Sheen and James Cromwell. *See Viewing Guide* (AD)

1.05am The NFL Show Action from Kansas City Chiefs v Detroit Lions **1.55** All Elite Wrestling: Collision (r) **3.35** Cooking with the Stars (r) (AD, SL) **4.25** Unwind with ITV **5.05-6.00** Katie Piper's Breakfast Show (r) (SL)

Channel 4
7.00 **Channel 4 News**

8.00 **PopMaster TV** Ken Bruce puts more music enthusiasts to the test in the third heat of the quiz show, but only one can come out victorious and secure a place in the series final (3/6) (r)

9.00 **Gogglebox** New series. The armchair critics share their opinions on what they have been watching during the week with cameras capturing their instant thoughts and reactions (AD)

10.00 **Open House: The Great Sex Experiment** A couple seek out a threesome with a woman, while another couple's collective insecurities threaten to jeopardise their hopes of inviting a husband and wife back for some shared intimacy (5/8) (AD)

11.05 **Greg Davies: Firing Cheeseballs at a Dog** The comedian and *Inbetweeners* star's acclaimed debut stand-up show from 2011, in which he sets out to chronicle the significant issues surrounding modern life (r) (AD)

12.25am FILM: The Craft (15, 1996) Four teenage witches use their powers to take revenge on classmates who have wronged them. Horror starring Robin Tunney and Fairuza Balk **2.10** Ramsay's 24 Hours to Hell and Back (r) (AD, SL) **3.00** Come Dine with Me Paralympics Special (r) **5.10-6.05** Location, Location, Location (r) (SL)

Channel 5
7.00 **Aldi: Secrets of the Billion Dollar Discounter** Documentary looking at how the German supermarket has succeeded in the UK, overcoming industry hostility and old-fashioned snobbery to win the public over with its various discounted goods (r)

7.55 **5 News Update**

8.00 **Puppy School for Guide Dogs** Cameras reveal how a dog and her pups are getting on. Meanwhile at puppy school, a trainee guide dog tries to use a pedestrian crossing (AD)

9.00 **Jane McDonald: Lost in Japan** The presenter explores Kyoto, a place of shrines and temples. Arriving in the city via bullet train, Jane decides a slower-paced form of transport would be more appropriate, so takes a rikshaw ride around the city before stopping in a bamboo forest (3/4)

10.00 **Million Pound Motorhomes** Debbie McGee and her sister take a trip down memory lane to the beach at Littlehampton that they used to visit as children, but this time in a motorhome. Plus cameras follow a team that adapt motorhomes to make them wheelchair accessible (8/10) (r)

11.05 **Yellowstone** Rip stumbles upon a dangerous and desperate situation and a plan is set in motion designed to squeeze John Dutton and threaten his way of life. Meanwhile, Monica begins a tough recovery (7/9) (r)

12.05am Motorway Cops: Catching Britain's Speeders (r) **1.00** Live Casino Show **3.00** King Tut's Last Mission (r) **3.50** The Funny Thing About Kids (r) (SL) **4.40** Great Artists (r) (SL) **5.05** House Doctor (r) (SL) **5.30** Entertainment News on 5 **5.40** Monkey's Amazing Adventures (r) (SL) **5.45-6.00** Paw Patrol (r) (SL)

Mozart's Great Mass at the Proms
BBC4, 7pm

Scotland's premier baroque ensemble the Dunedin Consort, led by the music director John Butt, unveil the musical inspiration behind Mozart's *Great Mass* in C minor, a colossus of the choral repertoire. The much-loved work, begun to celebrate Mozart's marriage but never completed, comprises the entire second half of the concert, while audiences are first treated to a series of shorter pieces by JS Bach and CPE Bach, two men who inspired Mozart. Katie Derham presents with special guest the organist Anna Lapwood.

Our Lives: Our Sea Forest
BBC1, 7.30pm

This week's half-hour insight into fascinating British lives is the story of a great underwater forest and one man's quest to protect it. In the 1950s the Sussex coast was a paradise for Eric Smith, who started freediving when he was 11. It was brimming with life, one of the most biodiverse places on the planet. Then in 1987, after a change in fisheries laws, Smith's kelp forest was decimated. After years of lobbying, Smith has helped to see through a trawling ban, and the recovery of the seabed is a key project for the UK. *Our Lives* goes underwater to show why.

Mrs Brown's Boys
BBC1, 9.30pm

***Mrs Brown's Boys* is formally daring (the corpsing, breaking the fourth wall) and has as high a gag rate as any sitcom. It's vastly popular. Of course, just as many people think it's abysmal, but they can go back to *Succession* and leave Mrs Brown's fans to snort along with the warm, rude brand of comedy as it returns for a new series. Mrs Brown has insomnia. "I've tried everything: brandy, Horlicks, the porn … NEWS channel!" Meanwhile, Grandad is constipated and doesn't receive any sympathy. "He doesn't give a shit," Mrs Brown says, "and I mean that literally." Come on now, don't be a snob.**

Film The Queen
ITV1, 11.25pm

The director Stephen Frears's examination of the aftermath of the death of Princess Diana is a very classy affair with a perfectly pitched script by Peter Morgan. Helen Mirren, in the title role, and Michael Sheen as Tony Blair are on top form. (12, 2006)

Sky Max

6.00am Supergirl (r) **7.00** DC's Legends of Tomorrow (r) (AD) **8.00** The Flash (r) **9.00** Stargate Atlantis (r) **11.00** Supergirl (r) **12.00** The Flash (r) **1.00pm** NCIS: Los Angeles (r) **3.00** Hawaii Five-0 (r) **4.00** S.W.A.T (r) (AD) **5.00** DC's Legends of Tomorrow (r) (AD) **6.00** Stargate Atlantis. Dr Beckett is forced to delay his departure from Atlantis (r) **7.00** Stargate Atlantis. Teyla embarks on a dangerous undercover mission (r) **8.00** Strike Back: Retribution. Section 20 races to prevent a gas attack in a busy airport (r) (AD) **9.00** Rob & Romesh vs Art. The duo create exhibitions for the Saatchi Gallery (r) (AD) **10.00** Warrior. Ah Sahm and Young Jun get printing advice from an unexpected source **11.10** The Blacklist. Red is identified as a possible hostage during a deli robbery (r) **12.10am** Road Wars (r) **1.05** The Force: Manchester (r) **2.00** Hawaii Five-0 (r) **3.00** Stop, Search, Seize (r) (AD) **4.00** S.W.A.T (r) (AD) **5.00** Highway Patrol (r) (AD)

Sky Atlantic

6.05am Fish Town (r) **7.55** The Leftovers (r) (AD) **10.00** Ray Donovan (r) (AD) **12.00** Game of Thrones (r) (AD) **1.05pm** This England (r) (AD) **3.35** The Leftovers. Double bill (r) (AD) **5.45** Ray Donovan. Mickey manipulates an A-list star into working with him on a project (r) (AD) **5.45** Ray Donovan. Terry, Bunchy and Ray mark the anniversary of their sister's death (r) (AD) **7.55** Game of Thrones. Ser Dontos spirits Sansa out of King's Landing onto a waiting ship, and Tywin has an offer for Oberyn Martell (r) (AD) **9.00** Billions. Prince clashes with his employees, while Sacker confronts a figure from her past who poses a threat to her future (5/12) (r) **10.10** Domina. Livia has to face some changes, while Antigone reveals that she is leaving to raise her child outside Rome (8/8) (r) (AD) **11.15** Drift — Partners in Crime. Maryam receives an anonymous threat (4/10) (r) **12.15am** Das Boot. Double bill of the drama series (r) **2.20** Game of Thrones (r) (AD) **3.30** In Treatment (r) **4.00** Fish Town (r)

Sky Documentaries

6.00am The 2000s (r) **7.00** Discovering: Ian McKellen (r) **7.55** The Directors (r) **8.50** Gaming Wall St (r) (AD) **9.55** The Vietnam War (r) **11.00** 100 Foot Wave (r) (AD) **12.00** The Golden Boy: Oscar De La Hoya (r) **3.00pm** Mission to Burnley (r) (AD) **4.00** The Directors (r) **4.55** Discovering: Ian McKellen (r) **5.50** Gaming Wall St. A movement is formed aiming to hold Wall Street accountable (r) (AD) **6.55** The Vietnam War. Hanoi lays plans for a massive surprise offensive in the conflict (r) **8.00** 100 Foot Wave. Garrett has concerns about proposed safety measures (5/6) (r) (AD) **9.00** Music Box. A look at singer-songwriter Alanis Morissette's rise to fame (2/6) (r) (AD) **11.00** Meth Storm. The impact that drug addiction has in an Arkansas community (r) (AD) **12.50am FILM: We Are Freestyle Love Supreme (15, 2020) 2.40** Telemarketers. New series. A look at the murky truth behind a seedy New Jersey call centre **3.45** Stirling (r) (AD) **5.00** Discovering: Ian McKellen (r)

Sky Arts

6.00am Darbar Festival 2018 **7.00** Punchdrunk: Behind the Mask **8.00** The Joy of Painting **9.00** Tales of the Unexpected **10.00** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **11.00** Discovering: Maggie Smith **12.00** The Joy of Painting **1.00pm** Tales of the Unexpected **2.00** Landscape Artist of the Year: Celebrity Special **3.00** Van Gogh & Japan (AD) **4.00** Discovering: Ben Kingsley **5.00** Tales of the Unexpected. Double bill of the series **6.00** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **7.00** The Joy of Painting. Double bill **8.00** Discovering: Meryl Streep **9.00** The Great Songwriters. Kenny Loggins talks about his life in music. Last in the series **10.00** AC/DC: Forever Young. Documentary about the rock band, featuring unseen footage **11.15** Brian Johnson's A Life on the Road **12.15am** Billy Joel in Black & White. The singer performs in Miami **1.15** Elvis Costello and the Imposters Live in Memphis **3.05** Phil Collins: Going Back to Detroit **3.55** Live from the Artists Den **5.05** The South Bank Show Originals

Sky Main Event

6.00am Sky Sports News **7.00** Good Morning Sports Fans **10.00** Sky Sports News **12.00** Live One-Day International Cricket: England v New Zealand. Coverage of the first ODI in the four-match series from Sophia Gardens, Cardiff. This will be the first ODI meeting between the two sides since the World Cup final in 2019, when England famously won their first World Cup title in a dramatic Super Over at Lord's **8.00pm** Live US Open Tennis. Coverage of day 12 of the Grand Slam tournament staged at Billie Jean King National Tennis Centre at Flushing Meadows in New York, featuring the opening men's singles semi-final match **11.30** Live US Open Tennis. Concluding coverage of day 12 at Flushing Meadows in New York, featuring the second men's singles semi-final **3.00am** Live NRLW: Wests Tigers v Brisbane Broncos (Kick-off **2.30**). Coverage of the rugby league match which takes place at McDonald Jones Stadium in Newcastle, New South Wales **4.30** Sky Sports News. The latest headlines

TIMES Documentaries

IN OUR NEW FULL-LENGTH DOCUMENTARY, WE DIVE INTO A DEEPLY DIVISIVE ASPECT OF AMERICAN DISCOURSE. THE TEAM SPENT TWO WEEKS IN FLORIDA INVESTIGATING THE IMPACT OF SOME OF THE MORE CONTROVERSIAL POLICIES OF GOVERNOR RON DESANTIS.
DIRECTED BY ALASTAIR GOOD.

SEARCH 'MAKE AMERICA FLORIDA' ON YouTube

TalkTV

6.00am James Max **6.30** Jeremy Kyle **9.30** Mike and Kev. A look at the front pages **10.00** The Independent Republic of Mike Graham. The host looks through the morning papers **1.00pm** Ian Collins. Monologues and debates **3.00** Kevin O'Sullivan. The host tackles the day's big stories **5.00** Vanessa Feltz. Interviews, and viewers' thoughts on what has got the nation talking **7.00** Plank of the Week. With Mike Graham **8.00** The World According to Mike Graham. A look back at the week's biggest stories **8.30** What Just Happened? with Kevin O'Sullivan. A review of the week's news **9.00** Piers Morgan Uncensored Best Of. The host presents his verdict on the week's global events **10.00** Jeremy Kyle: Investigates. A closer look at the issues currently making the headlines **11.00** The World According to Mike Graham **11.30** What Just Happened? with Kevin O'Sullivan. A review of the week's news **12.00** Petrie Hosken **1.00am** Plank of the Week **2.00** Kevin O'Sullivan **3.00** The World According to Mike Graham **3.30** What Just Happened? with Kevin O'Sullivan **4.00** Piers Morgan Uncensored Best Of **5.00** Cristo. Headlines

BBC4

7.00pm Mozart's Great Mass at the Proms. John Butt conducts Baroque ensemble Dunedin Consort in Mozart's Great Mass in C minor, preceded by shorted pieces by JS Bach and CPE Bach. Katie Derham presents. *See Viewing Guide* **8.45** Top of the Pops. An edition from 1984, with performers including Bucks Fizz, Spandau Ballet, Level 42, Alphaville and Sister Sledge **9.15** Top of the Pops. Peter Powell presents an edition from September 7, 1978, featuring the Jam, Leo Sayer, Boney M, the Motors and more **9.45** Adele at the BBC. The acclaimed singer-songwriter chats to Graham Norton about her life and career, and is accompanied by her band on classic tracks and songs from her album *25* **10.50** Michael Bublé: Radio 2 in Concert. The singer and his big band perform classic standards and Bublé originals at the BBC Radio Theatre, including *All of Me* and *Georgia* **11.35** Damien Rice: BBC Four Sessions. A concert by the singer-songwriter, performing tracks from his award-winning 2003 album *O* **12.35am** Duffy: BBC Sessions **1.20** Caro Emerald: Radio 2 in Concert. Performance by the Dutch jazz singer **2.10-3.20** Top of the Pops

Talking Pictures

6.00am Ensign O'Toole (b/w) **6.30 FILM: Thunder Rock (PG, 1942)** (b/w) **8.35** Dick Powell's Zane Grey Theatre (b/w) **9.10 FILM: Isn't Life Wonderful! (U, 1953) 10.50** Everything By Design **11.10 FILM: The Chase (PG, 1946)** (b/w) **12.55pm FILM: X the Unknown (PG, 1956)** (b/w) **2.30** Crown Court **3.00 FILM: Murder by Proxy (PG, 1954)** (b/w) **4.45 FILM: The Flying Deuces (U, 1939)** Comedy starring Laurel and Hardy (b/w) **6.00** Time to Remember. America in 1932 **6.35 FILM: Androcles and the Lion (U, 1952)** Satirical fable starring Alan Young (b/w) **8.30** Dial 999. Crime drama from 1958 (b/w) **9.00** Cellar Club with Caroline Munro **9.05 FILM: Dr Phibes Rises Again (15, 1972)** Horror sequel starring Vincent Price **10.55** Cellar Club with Caroline Munro **11.00 FILM: The Food of the Gods (18, 1976)** Sci-fi thriller starring Marjoe Gortner **12.50am** Cellar Club with Caroline Munro **12.55 FILM: The Outsiders: Extended Version (PG, 1983)** Drama with Matt Dillon **3.15 FILM: The Lost Hours (U, 1952)** (b/w) **4.45 FILM: At Twelve Midnight (PG, 1933)** (b/w)

Film4

11.00am Von Ryan's Express (PG, 1965) Second World War action adventure starring Frank Sinatra (AD) **1.20pm Operation Petticoat (U, 1959)** Second World War comedy starring Cary Grant and Tony Curtis (AD) **3.45 The Sons of Katie Elder (U, 1965)** Western starring John Wayne, Dean Martin, Earl Holliman and Michael Anderson Jr (AD) **6.15 Catch Me If You Can (12, 2002)** A conman lies his way across America, posing as a pilot, a doctor and a lawyer, while outwitting the FBI at every turn. Fact-based drama starring Leonardo DiCaprio and Tom Hanks (AD) **9.00 3:10 to Yuma (15, 2007)** A rancher escorts a notorious outlaw on a dangerous journey to a station where a train will take the prisoner to jail. Western remake starring Russell Crowe and Christian Bale (AD) **11.25 Man on Fire (18, 2004)** A former US government operative exacts revenge on the kidnappers who have abducted the girl he was hired to guard. Action thriller with Denzel Washington and Christopher Walken (AD) **2.15am-4.00 The Toll (15, 2021)** Comedy thriller starring Michael Smiley (AD)

More4

8.55am Kirstie's House of Craft **9.15** A Place in the Sun **10.05** A New Life in the Sun **11.05** Find It, Fix It, Flog It (AD) **1.10pm** Heir Hunters **2.10** Four in a Bed **4.50** Kirstie and Phil's Love It or List It (AD) **5.50** The Secret Life of the Zoo. The keepers try to encourage the giant otters to mate by introducing a new male (AD) **6.55** The Dog House. Efforts are made to find a home for a Patterdale terrier puppy (AD) **7.55** Her Majesty the Queen. A portrait of the life of Queen Elizabeth II, charting her reign and devotion to a life of service to the UK and Commonwealth (AD) **9.15** Rig 45: Murder at Sea. Emma is frustrated that no one will talk to her. Trevor is convinced that the hard drive is at the centre of everything that is going on. In English and Swedish (4/6) **10.15** 24 Hours in A&E. A man is rushed in after being stabbed with a broken bottle (4/8) (AD) **11.15** 24 Hours in A&E. The medical team at St George's treats patients who have injured themselves through work or play (5/8) (AD) **12.15am** 8 Out of 10 Cats Does Countdown. With Jack Dee, Tom Allen and Judi Love **1.20** 24 Hours in A&E (AD) **3.25-3.55** A Place in the Sun

ITV2

6.00am CITV **9.00** One Tree Hill **10.00** Dawson's Creek **11.00** Love Bites (AD, SL) **12.00** Dinner Date (AD) **1.00pm** Family Fortunes **2.00** Chuck **3.05** One Tree Hill **4.00** Dawson's Creek **5.00** Dinner Date (AD) **6.00** Celebrity Catchphrase. With Brian Conley, Sue Perkins and Colin Salmon (AD) **7.00** Family Fortunes. Gino D'Acampo hosts **8.00** Superstore. Jonah and Amy's first Valentine's Day together gets derailed (AD) **8.30** Superstore. Amy runs up against an executive with a grudge against her (AD) **9.00 FILM: Girls Trip (15, 2017)** Four old friends who have drifted apart reconnect for a wild weekend in New Orleans. Comedy starring Regina Hall, Queen Latifah, Tiffany Haddish, Jada Pinkett Smith and Larenz Tate **11.30** Family Guy. Peter, Quagmire and Joe take an eventful trip to Canada (AD) **12.00** Family Guy (AD) **12.30am** American Dad! (AD) **1.25** Superstore (AD) **2.20** Shopping with Keith Lemon **2.45** Unwind with ITV **3.00** Teleshopping **5.00** Dodo **5.25** Scooby-Doo! Mystery Incorporated **5.50** Craig of the Creek

ITV3

6.00am Classic Emmerdale **7.05** Classic Coronation Street (AD) **8.10** On the Buses **9.15** Where the Heart Is (AD) **11.35** Heartbeat (AD) **1.40pm** Classic Emmerdale **2.45** Classic Coronation Street (AD) **3.55** Endeavour (AD) **5.55** Heartbeat. A recently released convict becomes the target of a hate campaign (AD) **6.55** Heartbeat. A trawlerman is accused of being a spy by a Home Office official (AD) **8.00** Doc Martin. The doctor has his second GMC assessment. Meanwhile, Ken's arrival does not bring good news for Al and Bert (4/8) (AD) **9.00** Doc Martin. The acerbic GP investigates a shooting after a local farmer attacked a camper who took some of his eggs (5/8) (AD) **10.00** Agatha Christie's Poirot. An FBI agent crosses swords with Poirot while trying to retrieve the plans for a new submarine, which have been stolen by a glamorous singer (AD) **11.05** The Suspect. Having finally uncovered the truth, Joe now attempts to convince those around him before it is too late (5/5) (AD) **12.10am** Where the Heart Is (AD) **2.20** Unwind with ITV **2.30** Teleshopping

ITV4

6.00am Minder (AD) **7.05** The Professionals (AD, SL) **8.10** The Saint **9.15** The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes (AD) **10.25** Magnum, PI **11.30** Live Cycling: Tour of Britain. Coverage of stage six of the race, featuring a 146.2km route from Southend-on-Sea to Harlow **4.00pm** Great Racehorses **4.20** Made in Britain (AD) **4.55** Minder. Terry looks after an ex-convict (AD) **6.00** The Motorbike Show. Presenter Henry Cole takes a motorbike ride in the Yorkshire Dales **7.00** BattleBots. The tension is rising as the teams desperately fight for survival **8.00** Cycling: Tour of Britain Highlights. Action from stage six of the prestigious race **9.00** All Elite Wrestling: Dynamite. Hard-hitting, high-flying action from America **11.10 FILM: The Client (15, 1994)** A streetwise boy with information about a politician's disappearance hires a lawyer to protect him from the Mafia. Courtroom thriller starring Susan Sarandon, Tommy Lee Jones, Brad Renfro and Mary-Louise Parker (AD) **1.35am** Extreme Salvage Squad **2.30** The Protectors (SL) **3.00** Teleshopping

Drama

6.00am Teleshopping **7.00** Pie in the Sky **7.50** Doctors **9.05** Classic Holby City **10.25** Casualty **11.30** The Bill **12.35pm** Classic EastEnders **2.05** Pie in the Sky **3.05** Lovejoy **4.05** New Tricks (AD) **5.30** The Upper Hand **6.00** 'Allo 'Allo! Herr Flick interrogates Gruber about *The Fallen Madonna with the Big Boobies* **6.40** Last of the Summer Wine. Compo tests a car safety device invented by Seymour **7.20** Last of the Summer Wine. The trio decide there is profit to be made from a heatwave **8.00** Father Brown. The circus brings death to Kembleford when a clown is murdered (AD) **9.00** Father Brown. A murder is committed at an army barracks using a legendary sword (AD) **10.00** New Tricks. The investigators reopen the case of a vagrant who was strangled on a train, when DNA tests on a suspected robber reveal the man to be the victim's son (2/10) (AD) **11.20** Silent Witness. Nikki travels to Mexico to attend the funeral of a former intern, but soon realises the body is not her ex-colleague (AD) **1.55am** Detectorists. Comedy series (AD) **2.25** Classic Holby City (SL) **4.00** Teleshopping

Yesterday

6.10am Shipwreck Secrets **7.10** Underground Worlds (AD) **8.00** Abandoned Engineering (AD) **10.00** Secret Nazi Bases **11.00** Narrow Escapes of World War II (AD) **12.00** Great Continental Railway Journeys **1.00pm** Antiques Roadshow **2.00** Bangers & Cash (AD) **4.00** Narrow Escapes of World War II (AD) **5.00** Secret Nazi Bases **6.00** Great British Railway Journeys **7.00** Bangers & Cash. Derek auctions off some vehicles that were used in *Heartbeat* (6/10) **8.00** Secrets of the Railways. The Liverpool and Manchester Railway, which revolutionised rail travel when it opened in 1830 (5/6) (AD) **9.00** Bangers & Cash. Dave's in Lincolnshire picking up a 1935 Riley Falcon – a good-looking saloon car, with a pre-select gearbox (AD) **10.00** Bangers & Cash. Dave picks up a rare Subaru Impreza and an equally powerful Ford Escort RS Cosworth from Wales (AD) **11.00** Abandoned Engineering. The facility that held apartheid's greatest critic (1/12) (AD) **12.00** Great British Railway Journeys. Double bill of the series **1.00am** Shipwreck Secrets **2.00** Sounds of the Seventies **3.00** Teleshopping

Variations

BBC1 N Ireland
As BBC1 except: 7.30pm The Long and The Short of It. New series. History show presented by Tim McGarry and David Hume, beginning with the start of the Williamite war in Ireland in 1689 **8.00** Our Lives: Our Sea Forest. A man's efforts to restore a kelp forest off the Sussex coast. *See Viewing Guide* (AD) **8.30-9.00** Question of Sport. Highlights from the past 12 months. Last in the series

BBC1 Scotland
As BBC1 except: 11.15am-12.15 Homes Under the Hammer. Properties in Bolsover, Dawley and Darlington (r) **10.40pm** Sportscene. Cyprus v Scotland. Action from the UEFA Euro 2024 Group A qualifier staged at AEK Arena **11.25** Starstruck. Jessie has to decide if pursuing an old flame is a good idea (r) (AD) **11.45** Starstruck (r) (AD) **12.10am** FILM: Relic (2020) **1.35** Weather for the Week Ahead **1.40-6.00** BBC News

BBC1 Wales
As BBC1 except: 7.30pm-8.00 Kiri's TV Flashback. Funny clips revealing Wales's pet hates and irritations (r) **8.30-9.00** Our Lives: Our Sea Forest. A man's efforts to restore a kelp forest off the Sussex coast. *See Viewing Guide* (AD) **10.40** Rewind: 60 Years of Welsh Pop. Archive footage of Welsh pop artists from the 2000s **11.10** Starstruck. Jessie has to decide if pursuing an old flame is a good idea (r) (AD) **11.30** Starstruck (r) (AD) **11.55** FILM: Relic (2020) **1.20am-6.00** BBC News

STV
As ITV1 except: 4.25am-5.05 Night Vision

BBC Scotland
7.00pm The Seven **8.00** Inside Central Station (r) (AD) **9.00** Josh Taylor: Portrait of a Fighter (r) (AD) **10.00** Still Game (r) (AD) **10.30** Limmy's Show (r) **11.00-12.00** TRNSMT. With George Ezra, and the 1975. Last in the series

BBC Alba
6.00am Alba Today **5.00pm** Treubh an Tuathanais (Big Barn Farm) (r) **5.15** Na Clangers (r) **5.25** Sionnach agus Maigheach (Fox & Hare) (r) **5.35** AH-AH/No-No (r) **5.45** Meaban is Moo (r) **5.50** Peataichean/Pets (r) **5.55** Stòiridh **6.00** Aithne air Ainmhidhean (All About Animals) (r) **6.25** Stri (r) **6.30** Ronia, Nighean a' Mheirlich/Ronja, the Robber's Daughter (r) **7.00** An Là (News) **7.25** Dàn (r) **7.30** Machair (r) **7.55** Fraochy Bay (r) **8.00** Cearcall (r) **8.30** Rum Gu Rum, Le Erica (r) **9.00** Farpaisean Chon-Chaorach (Sheepdog Trials) (r) **10.00** FILM: Arracht (2019) Period drama starring Dónall Ó Héalaí, Dara Devaney and Saise Ní Chuinn **11.30** Mach à Seo! (r) **12.00-6.00am** Alba Today

S4C
6.00am Cyw: Blociau Rhif (r) **6.05** Jen a Jim Pob Dim (r) **6.20** Octonots (r) **6.35** Shwshaswyn (r) **6.45** Y Diwrnod Mawr (r) **7.00** Timpo (r) **7.10** Tomos a'i Ffrindiau **7.20** Oli Wyn (r) **7.30** Crawc a'i Ffrindiau **7.45** Cacamwnci (r) **8.00** Bing (r) **8.10** Digbi Draig (r) **8.20** Dathlu 'Da Dona (r) **8.35** Twt (r) **8.45** Asra (r) **9.00** Anifeiliaid Bach y Byd (r) **9.10** Cymylaubychain (r) **9.20** Ein Byd Bach Ni (r) **9.30** Patrôl Pawennau (r) **9.45** Deian a Loli (r) **10.00** Blociau Rhif (r) **10.05** Jen a Jim Pob Dim **10.20** Octonots **10.35** Shwshaswyn **10.45** Y Diwrnod Mawr **11.00** Timpo **11.10** Tomos a'i Ffrindiau **11.20** Oli Wyn (r) **11.30** Crawc a'i Ffrindiau **11.45** Cacamwnci **12.00** News; Weather **12.05pm** Richard Holt: Yr Academi Felys (r) **12.30** Heno Aur (r) **1.00** Ar Werth (r) (AD) **1.30** Cymry ar Gynfas (r) **2.00** News; Weather **2.05** Prynhawn Da **3.00** News; Weather **3.05** Grand Prix Speedway Caerdydd (r) **4.00** Awr Fawr: Misho (r) **4.10** Nos Da Cyw (r) **4.15** Oli Wyn (r) **4.25** Digbi Draig (r) **4.40** Amser Maith Maith yn Ôl (r) **5.00** Stwnsh: Y Brodyr Adrenalini (r) **5.10** Rhyfeddodau Chwilengoch a Cath Ddu (r) **5.30** Potsh (r) **5.50** News Ni **6.00** Dan Do. **6.15** News; Weather **6.45** Live Cwpan Rygbi'r Byd 2023: France v New Zealand (Kick-off **8.15**). The opening match of the Rugby World Cup 2023, staged at the Stade de France **10.25** Seiclo: Vuelta a España. Action from stage 13, from Formigal to Col du Tourmalet **11.00-12.05am** Cwpan Rygbi'r Byd Shane ac Ieuan (r)

MindGames

Backgammon Chris Bray

Changing of the guard

Carlos Alcaraz's victory at this year's Wimbledon signalled a changing of the guard in men's tennis which was long overdue. In backgammon we are seeing a similar change as much younger players such as Zdenek Zizka (Czech Republic) and Hideaki Ueda (Japan) are beginning to outperform their older colleagues.

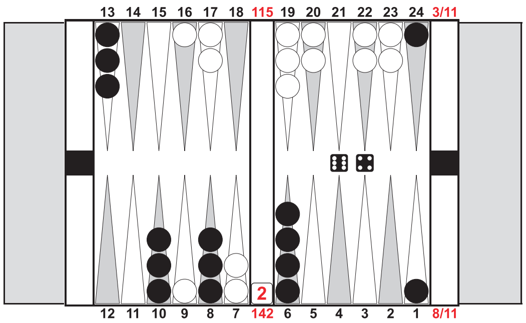
The same is true in the UK where Reece Hodges and Oliver Squire, both in their early twenties, are starting to make their mark. Oliver has already represented the UK and has taken a year off from university studies to improve his game.

His hard work was certainly rewarded when he won the Super Jackpot tournament at the recent world championships where he defeated Malcolm Hutson of Australia in the final. When he was leading 8-3 to 11 it all looked to be plain sailing but then he was faced (as Black) with this difficult 64 to play. Would you play 24/14, exposing the blot to 15 shots, or quietly build your home board with 10/4, 8/4?

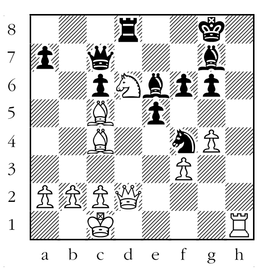
Oliver chose to make his 4-pt. This was one of his few errors, but it was perfectly understandable. 24/14 looks to be racing when behind, which normally is not a good idea. However, if Black is not hit, he will have an easy game to play and White will still have the problem of clearing his checkers from Black's bar-point. I think the majority of players would make the 4-pt here.

The Black checker on White's ace-point never did escape. It was closed out and White won a gammon. Malcolm then took a 10-8 lead, but Oliver fought back to 10-10, double match point. At the crucial moment in the final game, Oliver rolled the four he needed to hit a shot and thus won the game and match.

It was great to see youth triumph. What we as a nation now need to do is to build upon successes like this and create a core of young players who can consistently mount strong challenges at major tournaments. Sadly, I doubt the government will provide any funding and, unlike chess, it will not be taught in schools. Thankfully, however, the UK Backgammon Federation is taking the initiative.



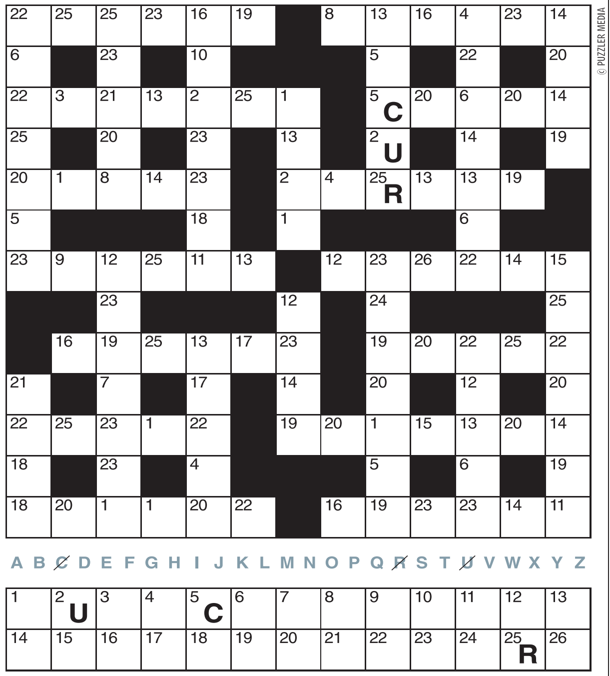
Winning Move



White to play.
This position is from Medarde Santiago-Fernandez Lopez, Pontevedra 2023.

White's position feels as though it has a great deal of potential energy but it is not obvious how this energy can be released. One of the problems is the annoying pin along the d-file, which is hampering White. However, thanks to an imaginative thrust the white forces came to life and quickly destroyed Black. How?

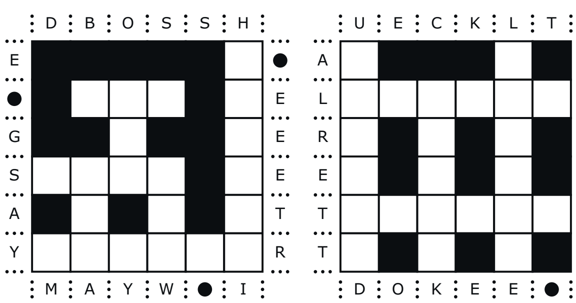
Codeword No 5001



Every letter in this crossword-style grid is represented by a number from 1 to 26. Each letter of the alphabet appears in the grid at least once. Use the letters already provided to work out the identity of further letters. Enter letters in the main grid and the smaller reference grid until all 26 letters of the alphabet have been accounted for. Proper nouns are excluded. *Yesterday's solution, right*

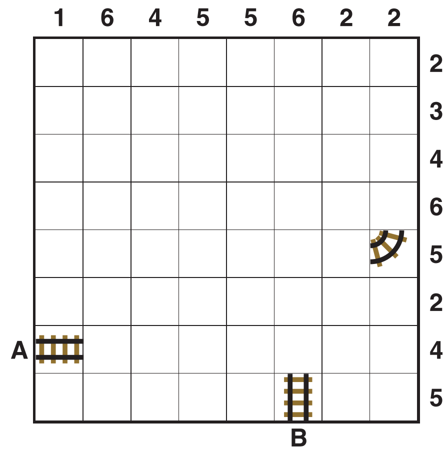
Cluelines Stuck on Codeword? To receive 4 random clues call 0901 293 6262 or text TIMECODE to 64343. Calls cost £1 plus your telephone company's network access charge. Texts cost £1 plus your standard network charge. For the full solution call 0905 757 0142. Calls cost £1 per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge. SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390 (Mon-Fri, 9am-5.30pm).

Lexica No 7039 No 7040



Slide the letters either horizontally or vertically back into the grid to produce a completed crossword. Letters are allowed to slide over other letters

Train Tracks No 2035



Lay tracks to enable the train to travel from village A to village B. The numbers indicate how many sections of track go in each row and column. There are only straight sections and curved sections. The track cannot cross itself.

Quintagram®

Solve all five **cryptic** clues using each letter underneath once only

1 Hill formed in some sandstone? (4)

_ _ _ _

2 Source of revenue hidden by lousy agent (5)

_ _ _ _ _

3 Old Conservative in a rocking chair (7)

_ _ _ _ _ _ _

4 Gets rain, possibly becoming most annoyed (8)

_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

5 Peel base off cheese (3,5)

_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

A	A	A	A	A	B	C	C
E	E	E	E	E	G	H	I
I	L	M	N	O	P	P	R
R	R	S	S	S	T	X	Y

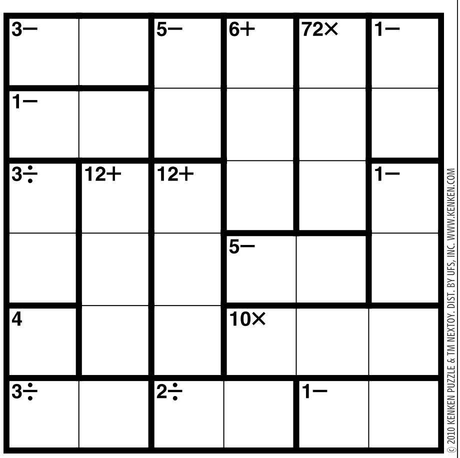
Challenge your mind with puzzle books from The Times



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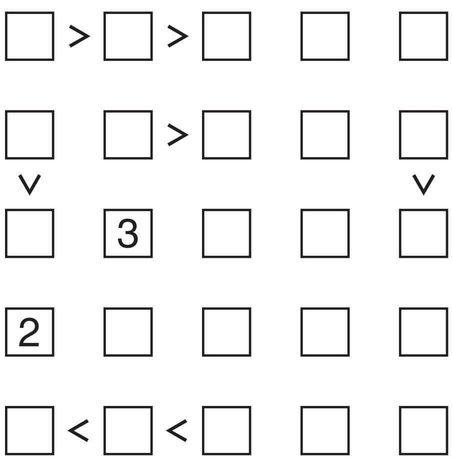
What are your favourite puzzles in MindGames?
Email: puzzles@thetimes.co.uk

KenKen Difficult No 5993



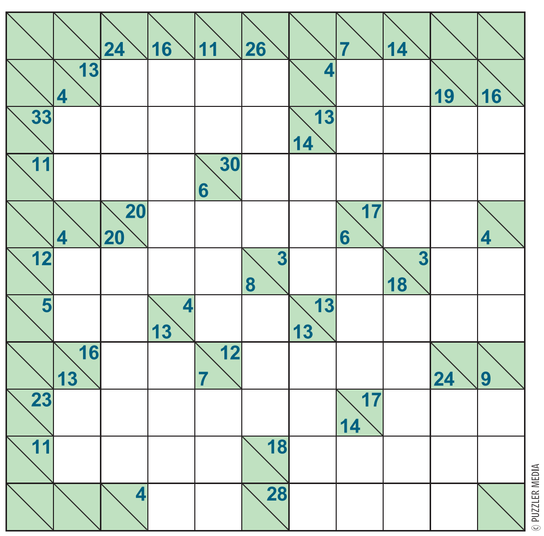
All the digits 1 to 6 must appear in every row and column. In each thick-line "block", the target number in the top left-hand corner is calculated from the digits in all the cells in the block, using the operation indicated by the symbol.

Futoshiki No 4560



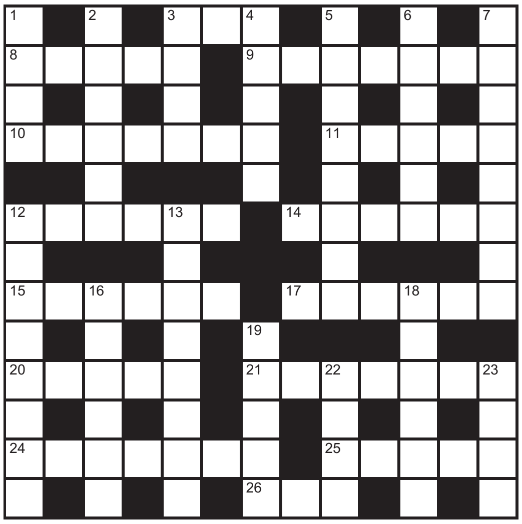
Fill the blank squares so that every row and column contains each of the numbers 1 to 5 once only. The symbols between the squares indicate whether a number is larger (>) or smaller (<) than the number next to it.

Kakuro No 3519



Fill the grid using the numbers 1 to 9 only. The numbers in each horizontal or vertical run of white squares add up to the total in the triangle to its left or above it. The same number may occur more than once in a row or column, but not within the same run of white squares.

times2 Crossword No 9317



Across
3 Colouring substance (3)
8 Practical function (5)
9 Ways, techniques (7)
10 Selected piece of text (7)
11 Bottle, guts (5)
12 Grammatical arrangement of words in a sentence (6)
14 Apprehend (6)
15 Natural, congenital (6)
17 Mediterranean island (6)
20 Spanish diacritical mark (5)
21 Crustacean (7)
24 Complete quiet (7)
25 Tumbledown hut (5)
26 Wood or paper thickness (3)

Down
1 Red or purple-brown hue (4)
2 High-kicking dance (6)
3 Cherished (4)
4 Without contents (5)
5 Venomous fish (8)
6 Fifth US president (6)
7 Hazardous fibrous mineral (8)
12 Playfully unpredictable (8)
13 Concurring (8)
16 In a fearless manner (6)
18 Ceremony (6)
19 Slumber (5)
22 Engaged in an activity (4)
23 Dissolute fellow (4)

Solution to Crossword 9316



Need help with today's puzzle? Call 0905 757 0143 to check the answers. Calls cost £1 per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge. SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390 (Mon-Fri 9am-5.30pm).

Bridge Andrew Robson

The Rules of One to Twenty Rule of 13

There are 13 cards in every hand and 13 cards in every suit. Bridge is not for a triskaidekaphobe (who would fear the number 13).

Your bridge will improve in leaps and bounds if you can familiarise yourself with the basic patterns/shapes of hands and suits. The top five are, starting with the most common: 4432, 5332, 5431, 5422, 4333. These are the big five — accounting for 70 per cent of all hands, and suits. The next five are (again, in frequency order): 6322, 6421, 6331, 5521, 4441.

Whether you are declaring or defending, try to work out the shapes of the hidden hands; and the shapes of the suits. This is the type of thinking you should be practising: "West has three spades, four hearts and two diamonds. Ergo, West has four clubs." Or: "Dummy has three diamonds, I (declarer) have two; West has five, ergo East has three diamonds." It's always the same: four numbers that add up to 13.

Try to reconstruct the initial shapes of players, making your constructions fit with all the clues. The more clues you can get, the better. The longer you delay making the crucial decision, the more chance you have of making the correct one — take our featured deal.

As declarer in 3NT, you duck ♠K opening lead, duck ♠Q continuation, and win ♠J with ♠A, East following to all three. Which suit do you play on first?

Dealer W

North: ♠75 ♥J32 ♦AJ5 ♣KJ742
West: ♠KQJ92 ♥AK94 ♦984 ♣10
East: ♠863 ♥1086 ♦10762 ♣Q86
South: ♠A104 ♥Q75 ♦KQ3 ♣A953

S	W	N	E
	1♠	Pass	Pass
1NT(1)	2♥ (2)	2NT	Pass
3NT	End		

(1) About 11-16 in the protective seat.
(2) West will later wish he'd retired from the auction once partner had passed his opening bid.

The suit in which you have the crucial decision to make is not clubs, but diamonds.

Here's why. You know West began with five spades; you know he began with four (or perhaps five) hearts; he has four (or perhaps only three) minor suit cards. You'd love to know how many clubs he has ... So find out how many diamonds he has.

When you cash three rounds of diamonds, you observe West follow to all three. Therefore, West is 5♠4♥3♦1♣ (or perhaps 5♠5♥3♦0♣ — but you can't succeed if East has all four missing clubs).

With West having only one club, you must hope it's ♣Q/♣10. Cash ♣K, delighted to observe West's ♣10. You can now lead ♣2 to (♣8 and) ♣9, cash ♣A felling ♣Q, and run the suit. Nine tricks made. andrew.robson@thetimes.co.uk

Brain Trainer

EASY 43 → +14 → 2/3 OF IT → +9 → x 2 → − 18 → 75% OF IT → +9 → ÷ 3 → 50% OF IT → ANSWER

MEDIUM 81 → x 7 → + 83 → 70% OF IT → − 77 → +½ OF IT → + 43 → 90% OF IT → − 67 → +½ OF IT → ANSWER

HARDER 173 → + 975 → x 3 → − 654 → 60% OF IT → + 774 → 11/12 OF IT → + 498 → +½ OF IT → − 827 → ANSWER

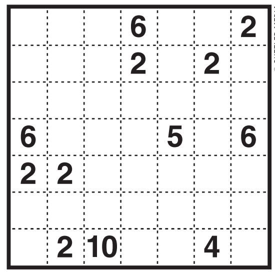
Polygon



From these letters, make words of **four** or more letters, always including the central letter. Answers must be in the *Concise Oxford Dictionary*, excluding capitalised words, plurals, conjugated verbs (past tense etc), adverbs ending in LY, comparatives and superlatives.
How you rate 13 words, average; 18, good; 24, very good; 30, excellent

Yesterday's answers
gink, king, **kingship**, kinship, knish, nigh, nisi, pigskin, ping, pink, pinkish, pish, shin, ship, sigh, sign, sing, sink, skiing, skin, skip, snig, snip, spin

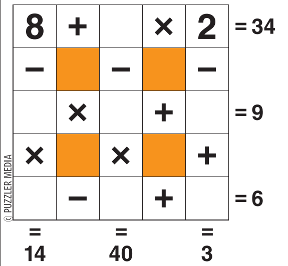
Cell Blocks No 4884



Divide the grid into square or rectangular blocks, each containing one digit only. Every block must contain the number of cells indicated by the digit inside it.

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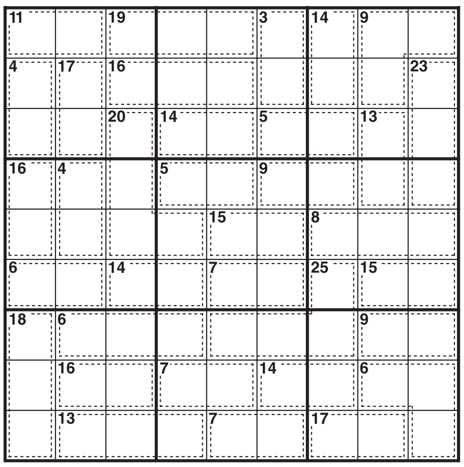
Set Square No 3522



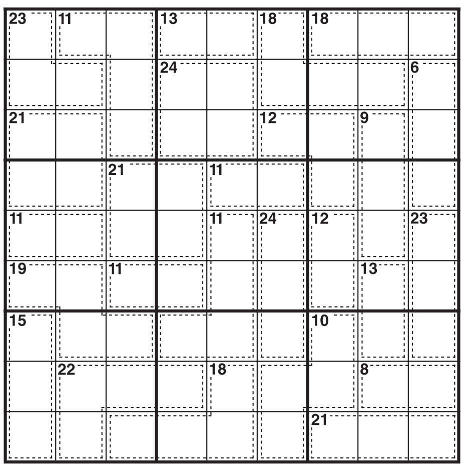
Enter each of the numbers from 1 to 9 in the grid, so that the six sums work. We've placed two numbers to get you started. Each sum should be calculated left to right or top to bottom.

Please note, BODMAS does not apply

Killer Moderate No 9059



Killer Deadly No 9060

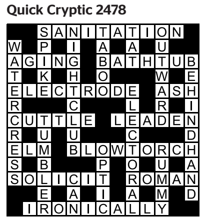


As with standard Sudoku, fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. Each set of cells joined by dotted lines must add up to the target number in its top-left corner. Within each set of cells joined by dotted lines, a digit cannot be repeated.

Cluelines Stuck on Sudoku, Killer or KenKen? Call 0901 293 6263 before midnight to receive four clues for any of today's puzzles. Calls cost £1 plus your telephone company's network access charge. SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390 (Mon-Fri 9am-5.30pm).

Solutions

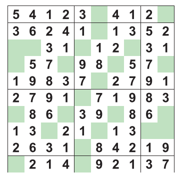
Quick Cryptic 2478



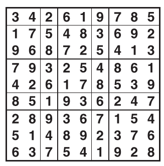
Codeword 5000



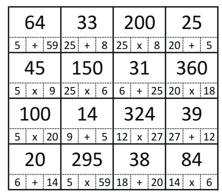
Kakuro 3518



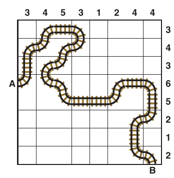
Sudoku 14,306



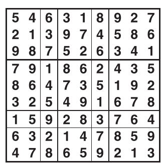
Tetonor 394



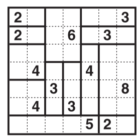
Train Tracks 2034



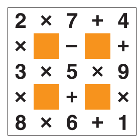
Sudoku 14,307



Cell Blocks 4883



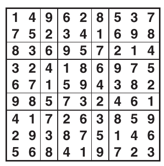
Set Square 3521



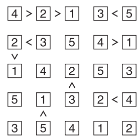
Lexica 7037



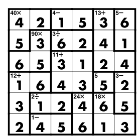
Sudoku 14,308



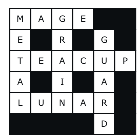
Futoshiki 4559



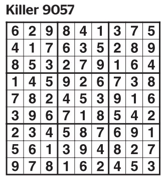
KenKen 5992



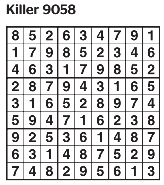
Lexica 7038



Killer 9057



Killer 9058

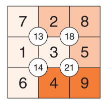


Today's solutions

Concise Quintagram
1 Extra
2 Delay
3 Honour
4 Monmouth
5 Time span

Cryptic Quintagram
1 Mesa
2 Proxy
3 Archaic
4 Angriest
5 Bel Paese

Suko 3902



Brain Trainer
Easy 11
Medium 723
Harder 3,286

Word watch
Trimix (c) A gas used in divers' air tanks (*Collins*)
Febrifuge (a) A fever-reducing medicine (*Chambers*)
Snootful (c) As much alcohol as one can take (*OED*)

Chess — Winning Move
1 Qxf4! exf4 2 Bxe6+ Kf8 and now 3 Nb5+ regains the queen leaving White a piece ahead. After 3 ... Qe7 4 Bxe7+ Kxe7 White is a little tangled but 5 Nc7 Kd6 6 Rh7 retains the extra piece

Quiz
1 Instant coffee (by Nescafé) **2** Denmark, as in Margrethe II **3** Tower of London **4** *Ghostbusters* **5** Virginia Woolf **6** Little Red Riding Hood **7** Dubai **8** Catherine of Aragon. Anne Boleyn was beheaded in May 1536 **9** Mohammad Mosaddegh **10** River Arun **11** Oliver Anthony Music **12** Central Park **13** Afghanistan **14** Sunil Gavaskar **15** Leo Tolstoy

THE TIMES

08.09.23

MindGames

Word watch
David Parfitt

Trimix
a A tabular array of numbers
b A star in the constellation Orion
c A gas used in divers' air tanks

Febrifuge
a A fever-reducing medicine
b A revolving machine for separating liquids
c A complex musical form

Snootful
a Contemptuously mocking
b Suffering from a cold
c As much alcohol as one can take

Answers on page 15

Sudoku

Mild No 14,309

						2	4	7
3						8		
4	6			8			3	
			2	5		9		
6		5		3		4		2
		7		9	8			
	8			7			1	6
		6						4
5	3	1						

Difficult No 14,310

							9	
	3			6				
			3	2	1		4	
		5			4			6
	4	8						
		2	5		9		7	3
								2
7		9			2		5	
			7		5	8		

Fiendish No 14,311

5	2						3	
6				9		5		7
						9	1	
	3		5					
1		8	7				9	
				8	4			
8				3				
2					7			8
	9	3		5			4	2

© PUZZLER MEDIA

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.

The Times Daily Quiz
Olav Bjortomt

1 The Gold Blend couple, Tony (Anthony Head) and Sharon (Sharon Maughan), advertised a brand of what?

2 The Royal Yacht Dannebrog is used by the queen of which country?

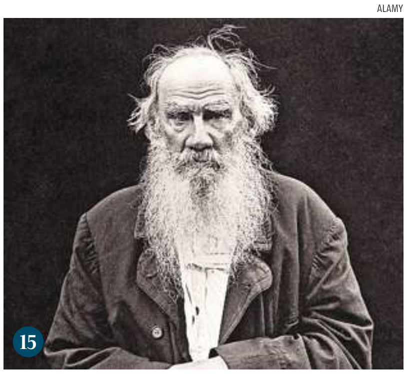
3 Which Unesco world heritage site is the home of the Crown Jewels?

4 Sigourney Weaver first played the cellist Dana Barrett in which 1984 film?

5 Who wrote the short stories *Kew Gardens* (1919) and *Mrs Dalloway in Bond Street* (1923)?

6 Which English name is given to the heroine of the Brothers Grimm fairytale *Rotkäppchen*?

ALAMY


15

7 Which of the United Arab Emirates halted construction on the man-made Palm Jebel Ali island in 2009?

8 Which former queen of England died in January 1536?

9 Operation Ajax (1953) was the CIA-orchestrated plot to depose which Iranian prime minister?

10 At 37 miles long, what is the longest river entirely in Sussex?

11 Who has had a 2023 US No 1 with the viral protest song *Rich Men North of Richmond*?

12 Emmy Raver-Lampman replaced Kristen Bell in the role of Molly Tillerman in which animated series?

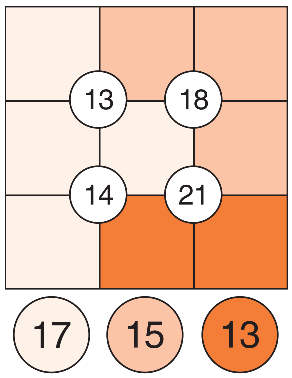
13 In 2009, Band-e-Amir became which Asian country's first national park?

14 Scoring 10,122 runs in Test cricket, which Indian batsman was dubbed the "Little Master"?

15 Which Russian writer is pictured?

Answers on page 15

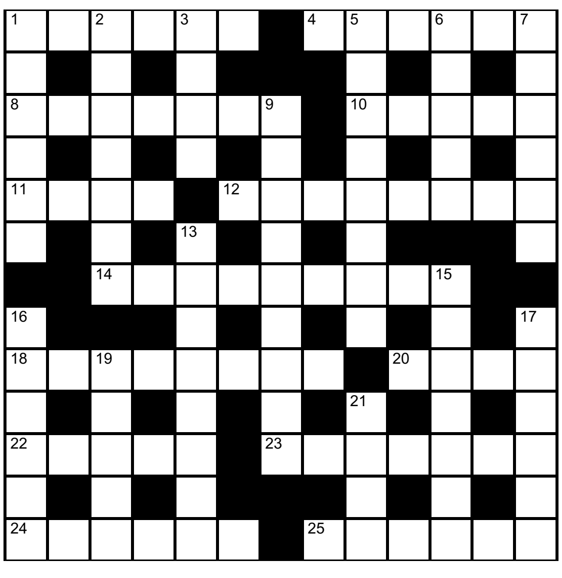
Suko
No 3902



Place the numbers 1 to 9 in the spaces so that the number in each circle is equal to the sum of the four surrounding spaces, and each colour total is correct

For interactive puzzles visit thetimes.co.uk

The Times Quick Cryptic
No 2479 by Breadman



Across
1 One who fails to turn up food bowl centrally (2-4)
4 Jack meets Elizabeth, religious woman (6)
8 Tree canopy peripherally attracts crowd (7)
10 A backward idiot, reserved and haughty (5)
11 Training unknown on top-grade peak (4)
12 Two pints, then European residents vacated lodging (8)
14 Clothing adornment, gold, hired out through Pete at work (9)
18 Father taken aback by pictures informally covering last supplement (8)
20 Heard of crucial landing-place (4)
22 Took a picture: that's capturing large ruminant (5)
23 Henry follows unusual one burning Stone Age artefact (7)
24 Copy campanologist? (6)
25 Each recalled info about a sea between Greece and Turkey (6)

Down
1 Pet above a river — German one (6)
2 Premier having drink with army engineers (7)
3 In Australia, you no longer can make public call (4)
5 One in local posh hotel somewhere in southwest France (8)
6 Standoffish, Republican failing to stress feelings (5)
7 During day, iron's most secure (6)
9 Huge number of calamari briefly overwhelming large cat (9)
13 Illness universal in winter month — daughter itches regularly (8)
15 Broadcast live, Sue is difficult to understand (7)
16 Quartet carrying Authorised Version showing goodwill (6)
17 Dash hopefully on the outside, with horse in enclosure (6)
19 Quietly managed to consume whiskey and seafood (5)
21 Joseph grasping king's quip (4)

Yesterday's solution on page 15

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FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 8 2023
THE TIMES

Bricks&Mortar



‘I saved £75k on my flat’

WHY LENDERS ARE FORCING HOUSE PRICES DOWN

pages 8-9

Home of the week

Hop on over to the mansion that inspired Watership Down. By Melissa York

The rabbits that hop around the four-acre grounds of Longhills Hall are no ordinary bunnies. They are the descendants of the rabbits that darted around the feet of the author Richard Adams, inspiring him to write *Watership Down*, one of the bestselling children's books of all time. The parkland-style grounds are still dotted with these cute critters at dawn and dusk — and are just as likely to charm the next custodian of this seven-bedroom property near the village of Branston, Lincolnshire

The owner of Longhills Hall, who lives in the US and does not wish to be named, bought it for an English relative and, after extensive works to restore it to its original glory, has put it on sale for offers over £1.5 million.

The seller had no idea of the house's *Watership Down* connection until last month, when he contacted By Design to put it on the market, says Adam Lascelles, the managing director of the estate agency's Lincolnshire and Grantham office. "This is an extraordinary opportunity to own more than a sophisticated and stylish home in the heart of rural England; you would be preserving a slice of literary history."

Longhills Hall was built in the mid-18th century, but the oldest part of the estate, the 2,000 sq ft cellars, date from Elizabethan times. However, it really began to take shape in 1836, when it was bought by George Basevi, a notable architect and surveyor who was a protégé of John Soane.

The house was requisitioned by the British Army during the Second World War, and Adams was stationed there while serving with the 1st Airborne Division — he and his fellow soldiers returned to England from north Africa in February 1944 and lived in the hall, stables and barns until they were redeployed in August. Their first impressions would have been similar to those of visitors today, of arched ceilings and a cantilevered stone staircase with iron railings in the entrance hall.

Many of the soldiers would go on to fight in the Battle of Arnhem, the nine-day conflict in September 1944 in which almost 2,000 Allied soldiers were killed. Adams was inspired by the exploits of those men and infused *Watership Down* with a violence and realism that rarely appeared in children's literature.

He became a civil servant when the war ended, but *Watership Down* came to life much later, in the 1960s, as a tale he told to his daughters to entertain them on a long car journey. The book was published in 1972 and sold 50 million copies worldwide and was turned into an animated film in 1978.

The home's refurbishment was led by Lemon and Lime Interiors, a Derbyshire design company brought in to restore the home's period features, such as shuttered windows, ornate plasterwork, intricate ceiling roses, cornices and original 18th-century fireplaces.

To acknowledge the grandeur of the place it has been decorated in regal green and earthy tones. "Longhills Hall is special," says Elaine Penhaul of Lemon and Lime. "I fell in love with it the very first time I saw it. The space and light in all the rooms is remarkable, with spectacular views of the parkland from almost every window."

£1.5 million, bydesignhomes.com

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£1.5 million





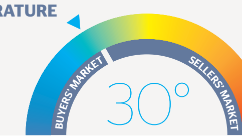
LN4 The postcode in numbers

In this part of Lincolnshire, 30% of properties on sale are under offer, rising to 33% of those costing £1m or more.

▼ 39% Decrease in buyer demand in the past year

£264,504 is the average house price

TAKING THE TEMPERATURE
BUYERS' MARKET
The hotter the market, the quicker and easier it should be to sell a home



Source: PropCast/Zoopla

What £800,000 buys you in ...

London TW10

This spacious (for southwest London) and light-filled apartment on the fourth floor of the Richmond Hill Court redevelopment has three bedrooms, one bathroom and a large reception room. It is located close to Richmond Park, the Thames riverside and the town centre with its plentiful shops, restaurants and theatres. The railway station offers access to central London by Tube and rail, with fast trains to Waterloo taking from 19 minutes. The flat comes with a big garage, 24-hour porter service, views over the Terrace Gardens and shared use of a private tennis court.

EPC D (potential C) — on a scale of A (best) to G (worst)
Upside Share of the freehold and there is no onward chain.
Downside The kitchen tiles are vivid.
Contact dexters.co.uk

£799,950



Somerset

Located near the village of Winsford, in Exmoor national park, this detached three-bedroom country house occupies an elevated position with commanding views of its three acres of formal garden and the surrounding countryside. Accessed via a conservatory with tiled flooring, the home has patio doors leading through to the sitting/dining room, where there is a brick fireplace inset with a wood-burning stove and raised hearth. The breakfast room/lounge has double doors that open on to the raised decked area with steps down to the gardens. It comes with stables (the area is a haven for horse riding and pony trekking), a paddock, summer house and ample parking.

EPC E (potential C)
Upside Fast-fibre internet connection.
Downside Oil-fired central heating.
Contact fineandcountry.co.uk

£795,000









Brief encounter
Ask the expert

Q The managing agents for my apartment have demanded a separate payment for buildings insurance. This was originally included in the monthly service charge. Are they legally allowed to do this?

A Almost all flat or apartment leases will say that it is up to landlords to insure buildings and common parts, with leaseholders contributing a proportionate part of the premiums. Many leases wrap up insurance premiums in the general service charges. Others require them to be paid separately as an "insurance rent". In either case the date and manner of payment for buildings insurance contributions should follow with the procedure laid down in the lease.

If leaseholders want to challenge their insurance contributions it does not matter whether they are paid as a separate insurance rent or as part of the general service charges, and leaseholders enjoy extensive statutory rights to challenge them. This is because the definition of a "service charge" in section 18(1) of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 includes any variable sum payable "for services, repairs, maintenance, insurance or improvements or the landlord's costs of management".

This means leaseholders can challenge insurance costs as being unreasonably incurred under section 19 of the 1985 act. Leaseholders can then apply to a property tribunal under section 27A of the act to decide whether insurance contributions have been properly demanded under the terms of their leases. What's more, the schedule to the act includes other rights for leaseholders to have details of the insurance policy.

Whether your landlord can introduce a new charge for insurance therefore depends on the terms of your lease. But you have a statutory right to challenge insurance costs under the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985.

Mark Loveday is a barrister with Tanfield Chambers. Email your questions to brief.encounter@thetimes.co.uk



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Cornwall

On a quiet lane in the hamlet of Boscean, overlooking the rugged west Cornish countryside and the Atlantic is this quirky, renovated period home that was once a counting house. A short stroll from St Just, England's most westerly town and a Unesco world heritage site, the property is arranged over two storeys. On the ground floor is a large kitchen and a dining/living space that opens into a garden room with windows on two sides. On the first floor are three bedrooms and two bathrooms, one of which is en suite, and a balcony with views over the gardens and sea. There is also a separate garage and study.

EPC F (potential C)
Upside Strong lighthouse keeper vibes, and no onward chain.
Downside Work needed to make it energy efficient.
Contact lillicrapchilcott.com



Saint-Babel, France

Set in the foothills of the Livradois-Forez Regional Natural Park in the Auvergne region, this contemporary property has roof terraces with unobstructed views of the surrounding countryside. The white-painted villa was initially built in 1980 but extended with a modern upgrade in 2017 under the supervision of a local architect. The result is a five-bedroom house with stylish features such as the living room's suspended Gyrofocus fireplace and the white lacquered Schmidt kitchen with a large central island. There are three shower rooms and baths as well as a spa and an infrared sauna, plus a swimming pool.

Upside The garage has space for eight cars.
Downside Design fit for a Bond villain.
Contact sextantproperties.com



Moving stories

Your tales from up and down the property ladder

‘We loved Corfu and made pork pies for expats — but red tape ruined our dream’



Helen and Dave Taylor in their new home, in Ellesmere Port, Cheshire, having returned from Corfu

In 2007 my husband, Dave, and I were living in Chesterfield, Derbyshire [says Helen Taylor, 56]. Dave was working as a car dealer and I was working as a director in recruitment for the fashion industry. We often took holidays in Corfu and fell in love with it: the weather, the people, the low cost of living, the simpler way of life. So we bought a piece of land and built a house. We’re a pair of nutters: we built a four-bedroom, four-bathroom house in a wooded valley on the northwest of the island, near Sidari. It had half an acre of land. In 2013, we decided to move there for seven months of the year. Dave stopped car dealing, but I continued to do my job part-time from abroad. We moved out permanently in 2015.

I suppose we had rose-tinted glasses. It’s different when you live there full time. It’s not paradise. Corfu is green for a reason. It rains a lot. If you like storms, there are some corkers. There are power cuts. And it can be really cold. We had frost, and even snow. We’d spend €500 to €600 a month on heating in winter. The damp was the hardest thing.

After a while, Dave was desperate for a decent pork pie. So he started making some. We tried them out on a few expats. They all said: “Oh my God, you have got to sell these.” A hobby turned into a massive business. In 2018 we launched Proper Pies. Initially it was pork pies and steak-and-kidney pies, but it mushroomed: we made our own English sausage, cured our own bacon, made black pudding and haggis. I quit my other job and we took on another staff member. It got bigger and bigger. Christmas was a mad time. We supplied a British shop in Athens and a butcher in Kefalonia. When you run a business there, the system is difficult, let alone the language. It was bloody hard work for not a lot of return.

Our house was too big and we needed to downsize; so we sold it in June. Our plan was to buy a plot of land and build a prefab eco home that was warmer. But the laws in Corfu have changed since we first bought, which makes it difficult to buy small pieces of land. And the plots for sale had legal complications: a deceased grandfather who hadn’t had their will sorted. The red tape was ridiculous.

The inheritance laws in Greece are also a pain. Dave has a daughter and we thought, do we want to land her with those problems? We thought about renting, but anything decent had been converted to Airbnbs. We were so tired. Our business had grown into a monster.

My parents are in their late seventies and late eighties and my mother planted the idea in our minds that we could move back and live near them in the Wirral. I’ve seen far too many expats on Corfu get emergency phone calls about a problem with ageing parents back home. In Covid you couldn’t travel back. I didn’t want to go through that.

So, we decided to move home. But we couldn’t sell the business. Had Brexit not happened, we could have advertised the business in the UK and someone would have snapped it up. But now anybody from Britain is classed as a third-country national and not allowed to work, run a business, or employ anybody in the EU. The Brits who do live in Corfu are predominantly retired and don’t want to work. Our customers were crying when we said we were closing. They stockpiled our products.

We’ve since bought a two-bedroom house in Glisk, a Northstone development in Ellesmere Port, Cheshire, on the Wirral. It’s very energy efficient, well insulated and has a small garden. We paid less than £250,000. We moved in in April and have adjusted very well. We put in a garden room that Dave has made into a bar — he brews his own beer, which saves money on pubs. I’ve got a part-time job in luxury retail. Mum and Dad are delighted we are back.

I do miss Corfu. I was all right in June when the weather was good, but the last two months I found tough. God knows in January I’ll be crying.

But we are ten minutes from the sea, there are lovely coastal walks and a large wooded area about a three-minute walk from our house. As for Corfu, we’ve been there, we’ve done it. We enjoyed it. Some of it was painful. But there are good and bad parts to anywhere you live. Now it’s the next chapter for us, the next adventure. It’s all good.

Interview by Hugh Graham

Have your say
Would you like to share your moving story? Email **carol.lewis@thetimes.co.uk**

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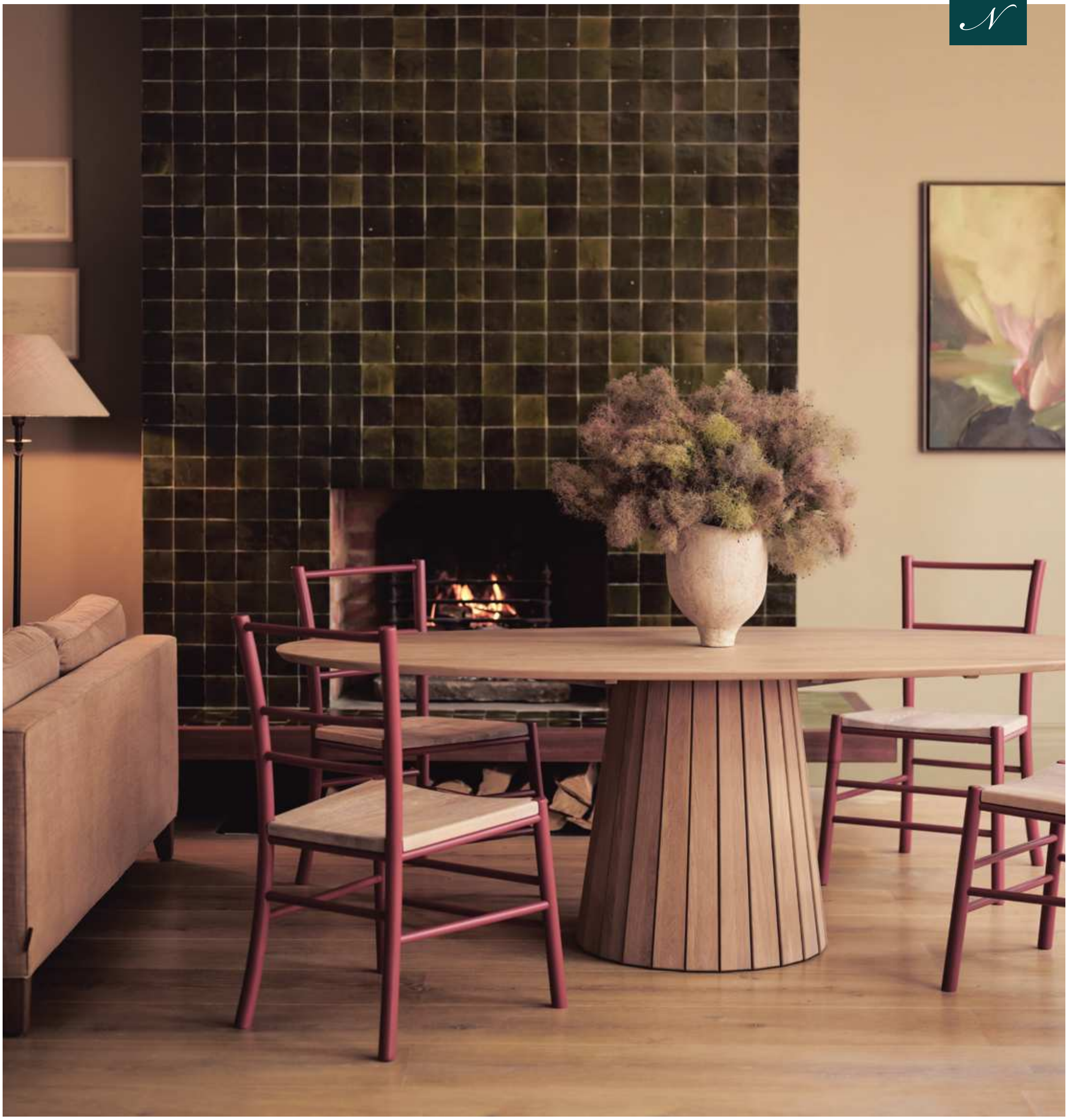
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The clamour for grammars

With Labour planning to levy VAT on independent school fees, grammar-rich areas are hot property. By Liz Rowlinson

This month thousands of hopeful Year 6 students will be sweating over 11-plus exams for grammar school entry. Many will have been prepped and tutored for this moment for many months, and the signs are that it will become more competitive than ever over coming years.

Sebastian Gale has daughters aged six, four and 18 months, yet he's already choosing which grammar schools to aim for. Privately educated, he had assumed that his children would be able to follow the same path, but not now. "Paying three lots of school fees will be a big hit if we went independent — even more so if they go up under a Labour government," he says, referring to the party's proposal to strip independent schools of their charitable status and remove the VAT exemption on fees.

Gale and his family, who live in south London, have chosen to move to Kent for its unrivalled number of grammar schools. He says: "We are house hunting between Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells — Tunbridge Wells Girls' Grammar [aka Twiggs] and Weald of Kent Grammar are top of our list."

He is not alone in rethinking plans for his family's education — nor in doing it so far in advance — as rising fees have been pricing families out of schools they could previously afford. The UK's high inflation has added further pain, and this year independent school fees increased by 5.6 per cent, according to the Independent School Council (ISC) — the highest annual rise since 2009. The average annual fee for a day school is £16,656.

Labour's plans for independent schools have changed the landscape for some buyers, says Claire Carter, head of the country house department at the estate agency John D Wood. "This year more of our buyers are looking for areas with non-fee-paying schools," she says.

According to the most recent ISC survey, of 16,333 parents, 19 per cent said that they would have to withdraw a child from independent school if VAT was levied on fees.

A move from London or Surrey to Kent is a clear trend among buyers, Carter says. Kent offers 42 grammar schools, according to research by Savills estate agents, with commutable towns such as Tunbridge Wells usually top of buyers' lists.

Fiona Penny is a property finder helping a family with two children looking to move from Wandsworth in southwest London to Kent. "They were going to go independent, but now want Kent grammars as they're uncertain of their financial position in five years," she says.

> **Paying three lots of school fees would be a big hit if we went independent — even more so if they go up**

In addition to those already mentioned, Tunbridge Wells and the Tonbridge area also offer Tonbridge Grammar, the Skinners' School, Tunbridge Wells Grammar for Boys and the Judd School. The average house price in Tunbridge Wells for the past year is £522,794, according to the online portal Zoopla. "There's a lot more room for negotiation right now," Penny says. "But always choose the school before the house."

Popular villages around Tunbridge Wells are Speldhurst, Fordcombe, Bidborough and Langton Green, where Lindsay Howard-Jones and her husband, Charles (pictured, opposite), who were living in southeast London, have just bought a five-bedroom house. It's close to Langton Green Primary School (rated outstanding by Ofsted) for their children, Annabelle, four, and Monty, two. "In Crystal Palace we weren't in the catchment area for a good school," says Lindsay, 43, an accountant. "So we chose an area where there will be a good choice of grammar schools — or we could have ended up spending more than £200,000 in school fees. We are now in the catchment area for Twiggs."

Ollie Marshall, a buying agent at Prime Purchase, chose Tunbridge Wells because there are good non-grammar state options if his two daughters do not get into Twiggs. He and his family





Left: a four-bedroom house in Goudhurst, Kent, is on the market for £1.2 million with Savills



This four-bedroom house in Hawkhurst, Kent, is on the market for £825,000 with Savills



In Chalfont St Giles, Buckinghamshire, this six-bedroom house is for sale through Strutt & Parker for £3.25 million



A five-bedroom home in Ludgershall, Buckinghamshire, is on the market for £1.75 million through Strutt & Parker





Left: a five-bedroom detached house in Salisbury, Wiltshire, is on the market for £1.65 million with Strutt & Parker. Right: in Groombridge near Tunbridge Wells, Kent, this two-bedroom house is on the market for £600,000 through Strutt & Parker

moved to the town from south London last month. "We considered moving to Marlow or Winchester for schools too, but nowhere could compare with Tunbridge Wells," he says.

Cranbrook School, a non-fee-paying co-ed selective school in Kent that takes boarders from outside the catchment area (only boarders pay fees), is also a target for movers, Penny says. The average house price in Cranbrook for the past year is £517,370, according to Zoopla. Savills is selling a four-bedroom property in the Cranbrook School catchment area for £825,000.

Buckinghamshire, with 13 grammar schools, is another popular location, according to Jemma Scott of the Buying Solution, an agency that specialises in properties in London and the home counties. She says that the area between Beaconsfield and Berkhamsted is popular because of Chesham Grammar, Dr Challoner's Grammar in Amersham and other options in High Wycombe and Aylesbury. A three-bedroom terraced house in Amersham would cost between £600,000 and £750,000, according to Steven Spencer of Strutt & Parker estate agents, although Aylesbury is more affordable.



Two schools in Aylesbury — Sir Henry Floyd and Aylesbury Grammar — were the reasons that Krishna Goli and his wife, Priya, decided to move there with their ten-year-old son from Harrow, north London, in November.

They've bought a new four-bedroom house at Kingsbrook, a Barratt development where such homes cost from £480,000. "We wanted to stay close to London and didn't want to go south, so thought Buckinghamshire best for grammars," says Krishna, 42, who like Priya works in IT. "Independent schooling could have been an option, but we needed more space and couldn't afford that in Harrow."

Gaining more living space versus paying school fees was the choice for Yasmin (surname withheld) and her husband, Ben, who are swapping Dulwich for Gerrards Cross in Buckinghamshire this month. They are moving into a five-bedroom house that is double the square footage of their four-bedroom terraced property in southeast London. "We couldn't afford to upsize in Dulwich, but love the fact that Gerrards Cross is also full of independent shops," says Yasmin, 39, a civil servant.

Schooling for their two children — Jonas, five, and Milo, 20 months — was also a key driver for the couple. "Neither of us went to an independent school," Yasmin says. "Yet ironically the timing of the move meant that there wasn't a space for Jonas in a state primary, so we've had to put him in an independent school — but we want him back in the state system at age 11."

Yet this could prepare Jonas better for the 11-plus exam. "At many independent preps in Kent, moving on to a grammar school at 11-plus is a well-trodden path — the pass rate for children at prep schools generally sits at about 90 per cent," says Teddy Wolstenholme of Talk Education, a schools consultancy. "Some parents choose an area with good independent schools too, as a back-up if their child doesn't get into a grammar."

Other areas in demand for grammars include Cheltenham, Cirencester, Salisbury, the West Midlands, Essex and Kingston-upon-Thames. The grammar schools in Bexley, southeast London, are also a big pull, says Steve Brown of Winkworth estate agents. "The catchment areas for the grammars there are quite large, and families can also live in Blackheath or Hither Green. Three-bedroom period family homes in Bexley start from £600,000."

With an average house price of £229,655 in the past year, Lincolnshire is perhaps the most affordable area that offers a good selection of grammar schools — there are 15 of them in the county. A five-bedroom farmhouse near Grantham, which has two grammar schools (Margaret Thatcher was head girl at Kesteven and Grantham Girls' School), is on sale for £525,000 through Winkworth.

Which counties have the most grammar schools?

Kent	42
Lincolnshire	15
Greater London	14
Buckinghamshire	13
West Midlands	11
Essex	8
Devon	7
Gloucestershire	7
Merseyside	7
Greater Manchester	7

Source: Savills



Downward spiral

COVER STORY

As house prices continue to fall, worried lenders are downvaluing, throwing chains into chaos. By David Byers

First-time buyer Clementine Hudson was initially thrilled when she managed to knock £65,000 off the £550,000 asking price of a one-bedroom flat on the Isle of Dogs, east London — a process that took six weeks of negotiation.

However, the 26-year-old was soon in for a nasty shock. Two weeks after her £485,000 offer was accepted by the reluctant seller at the start of May, her mortgage company, NatWest, threw her purchase into chaos by declaring that the flat was really only worth £460,000, limiting what it would lend to her.

Once vanishingly rare, downvaluations like these are now so common that mortgage brokers describe them as the norm in today's shrinking property market, and they threaten to throw swathes of chains into chaos.

They are happening because lenders are worried that the accelerating rate of falling house prices — which analysts at Nationwide and Halifax say are now sinking with a rapidity not seen since the global financial crisis — might leave a growing number of borrowers at risk of negative equity, which is when their property's value falls beneath their mortgage balance. The price drops are being fuelled by the mortgage crisis, which is leaving would-be buyers unable to afford properties. This week the Resolution Foundation, a think tank, said that mortgage holders will have to pay an average of £3,000 more next year as they fix on to vastly higher interest rates than before.

In the case of Hudson's mortgage, NatWest's downvaluation followed an inspection carried out by its surveying partner Legal & General. It meant that she faced being unable to get the £225,000 mortgage she had banked on for a property costing £485,000 and was likely to be promised less, in accordance with what NatWest's surveyor believed to be the true value. This left her with a choice: to try to renegotiate the price down again with her seller, or stump up a bigger deposit in order to bridge the gap.

During a frantic few weeks she managed to renegotiate the price of the flat again, down to £475,000. Plus, much to her relief, NatWest eventually confirmed it would still honour her £225,000 mortgage. By the time the process was completed and she had exchanged, five months had elapsed since her first offer for the property.

"I had expected the sale to move quickly. The seller wasn't in a chain and had moved abroad so the flat had been empty for six months, and I am a first-time buyer so I am not in a chain. But it was anything but," Hudson says.

"I'm so glad I stood my ground. Given how prices are dropping now, I'd be feeling a little foolish for jumping into it."

For Hudson the downvaluation is a relief because it ensured she wasn't ripped off by the seller. She now believes he valued the flat in an inflated way appropriate for the Covid-boom era and not for a shrinking market.

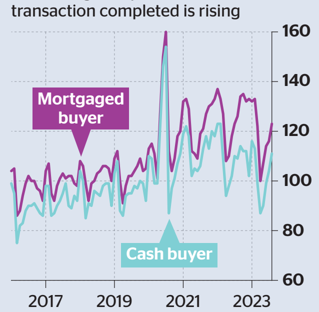
For many buyers, however, the increasing tendency of banks to declare "computer says no" is leading to purchases collapsing completely, along with the corresponding chains.

Darryl Dhoffer, a broker based in Bedford and founder of the Mortgage Expert, says downvaluations like this case "are becoming the norm", particularly in areas in the south of the country at the centre of the pandemic-era property bubble.

He warned that the chances of successfully appealing a downvaluation by your lender's surveyor are slim at best. "You're more likely to catch a brick in a cobweb," he says.

Buying time

The number of days between an offer being accepted and transaction completed is rising



Source: Hamptons

"Getting an exchange over the line today is like walking a tightrope 50ft up while navigating an assault of doom-laden news, rising costs and indecision," says Emma Fildes, a property buying agent who represented Hudson.

Until recently sellers held the power in much of the country as buyers flocked to their front doors in droves during a buying frenzy fuelled by then-chancellor Rishi Sunak's stamp duty holiday.

Now a rapidly slowing market means they have far fewer options, and are even being dragged back to the table by buyers to renegotiate (often already reduced) prices after downvaluations — something they would have regarded as unthinkable during the pandemic boom years.

"Last year sellers would have laughed at you — in a rising market there is always someone behind you willing to pay more," says Anna Mole, a buying agent at Oxford Property Consulting.

"But today higher mortgage rates have made buyer budgets more sensitive to downvaluations and sellers, with many fewer offers, are now more willing to negotiate."

Henry Pryor, a buying agent, illustrates how attitudes are changing. He remembers one buyer early last year who agreed to press ahead and pay £1.3 million for a family house in Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire, despite being hit by a survey that found the roof needed work that would cost £45,000. "The seller had lived there for 40 years and was very embarrassed about the damage but refused to drop the price, saying they had a queue of other offers," Pryor says.

If surveyors acting for banks are fussy now, they're likely to be more so after seeing the recent property price data from Nationwide and Halifax, both released in the last seven days, which suggested falls were accelerating. Nationwide found prices around the country are now an average of 5.3 per cent lower than they were this time a year ago as average mortgage rates are expected to trend well above 6 per cent for the next year and continue to deter would-be buyers. Halifax put the fall at 4.6 per cent. The average UK house price is now £259,153, down from £260,828 in July and from £273,751 a year ago, according to Nationwide.

The comparison site Uswitch says the average two-year fixed-rate mortgage deal for a borrower with a 25 per cent deposit was still 6.65 per cent on Tuesday, a snail's pace fall from the 6.75 per cent average from a week earlier and still hugely unaffordable for many.

Nationwide says a typical first-time buyer earning the average wage and armed with a 20 per cent deposit will now be paying more than 40 per cent of their takehome pay servicing their mortgage whereas, historically, that figure has been closer to 29 per cent.

Above: Clementine Hudson, 26, a first-time buyer who knocked £75,000 off the price of her one-bedroom flat in east London (pictured, opposite)

Even though price falls are modest so far, given how much they went up during the pandemic, projections suggest they will continue to head downwards, although by how much is in significant dispute. Zoopla and Nationwide reckon a very modest 5 per cent this calendar year, while Capital Economics says 10.5 per cent from the market's peak in August 2022 to the trough — potentially in the middle of next year. Charlie Lamdin, a YouTube personality and founder of the property comparison site BestAgent, is a noisy outlier with predictions of a 35 per cent peak-to-trough drop.

But while downvaluations and price reductions hamper many, the slowing down of the UK market is also being noted with relish by cash buyers in search of a bargain — particularly those from abroad. Fayyaz Malik, an American who recently retired as finance director at an electronics company in Silicon Valley, bought a flat in Nine Elms, southwest London, in July for £650,000 — £90,000 less than its asking price of £740,000.

"We did feel that compared with others in the neighbourhood this may have been a little overpriced. We also wanted to test whether the UK property market had softened up a little bit, so we intentionally offered a lower price to see how motivated the sellers were."

Another group of foreign buyers taking advantage of cut-price deals are affluent Hongkongers. Expats or emigrés now make up 10 per cent of all foreign landlords in Britain compared with just 5 per cent in 2020, according to figures released last month by the estate agency Hamptons.

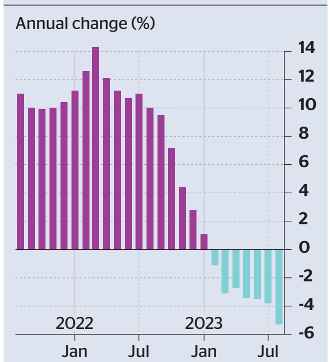
But for ordinary young buyers whose hopes have been hit by the mortgage crisis, the prospects look bleak. One such

GREY HUTTON FOR THE TIMES





House prices fall



Seasonally adjusted. Source: Nationwide

buyer, Charlotte, is preparing to go back to the seller of a home in north London she agreed to buy for £700,000 in July, to persuade her to reduce her price by £50,000 after her mortgage company refused to offer the rate they had offered her in March. "My hunch is they'll put it back on the market and if no one else comes in they'll come back to me in a few weeks," she says.

The slowing market

As the number of downvaluations grows, statistics show that the property market is slowing down sharply.

An analysis by Hamptons from its database shows the number of days from the point a mortgaged offer is accepted to the keys being handed over is increasing across Britain, rising from 100 in April to 123 last month. Even transactions involving those without mortgages are slowing, from an average of 87 days in April to 111 today.

Transactions took significantly longer in August 2022 when the market was at its peak (126 days for mortgaged buyers to get from accepted offer to completion and 109 for cash buyers) and even longer than this during the pandemic (160 for mortgaged buyers and 154 for cash in July 2020).

However, Aneisha Beveridge, director of research at Hamptons, says that these slowdowns were being caused by other factors — during the pandemic it was the unprecedented surge of buyers entering the market to take advantage of the stamp duty tax holiday and gumming up the system. Meanwhile, she says that a year ago the market was being held up by a shortage of solicitors.

"We think [the earlier peak] was predominantly due to a lack of conveyancing capacity, but this time we think they're rising due to more complicated chains and wider uncertainty about the market," she says.

Broken down by region, transactions in the the East Midlands take the longest in Britain (134 days from offer agreed to completion for mortgaged and cash buyers combined), followed by the East (132 days), Yorkshire and the Humber (131), West Midlands and North West (126), South West and Wales (119), the South East (114), London (112) and North East (111). Transaction times in Scotland are markedly shorter (64 days) because of the streamlined rules by which property is bought and sold there.

Offers north of the border are made by solicitors, not estate agents, after a "blind bidding system" in which buyers give sealed bids in a single day and are transparent about when they can move. After an offer is accepted, homes are taken off the market straight away, making gazumping and gazundering highly unlikely.

Additional reporting by Hugo Cox

Testing times

The best bread bins



Lakeland drawstring bread storage bag

£11.99, lakeland.co.uk

★★★★★

Best buy

First impressions Good size without being bulky, at 36x46cm. Judging by the artisanal bread print, it's aimed more at sourdough bros than sliced white fans.
Saturday Cut into slices my loaf seems freshest of all the ones I tested.
Wednesday Moist and springy, with tiny mould spots on the outer crust.
Verdict The Goldilocks option. Best mix of looks and functionality.

Compiled by
@KatrinaBurroughs

Next week's test
Towels

Correction: Our Best Buy in last week's Testing Times should have been the Shark Klik n' Flip Manual Steam Mop S6001UK, not the Russell Hobbs Steam & Clean Upright Steam Mop as we said. We awarded the Shark five stars and the Russell Hobbs two stars.

We've fallen into a routine. Some time after midnight and before 6am, Robert wakes up hungry. He tiptoes to the kitchen and checks the countertops for bread. He will wolf half a loaf, bolt a bap or snaffle a focaccia square. By morning, the work surface is bare. Robert is my ever famished labrador, and I've been told by a trainer of obedience champions that the solution is to stay awake, catch him in flagrante and administer a ferocious telling off. I decided to get a bread bin instead.

> Instead of telling off my crumb-loving labrador, I decided to get a bread bin instead

I've never liked bread bins: big blocky forms that clutter the counter, hiding your bread, which you consequently forget about until it is mouldy. But this pilfering could be a problem faced by countless readers, and Testing Times is all about meeting your needs, so I called in five reasonably priced designs to see how they performed. All provided solid anti-canine security, but which style of storage was best for extending the life of my loaves?

My bread trial was a week-long challenge. I bought seven 800g crusty white split-tin loaves from Tesco, at £1.35 each, on Thursday, August 24, and stored six in the bread bins, keeping one out (on a high shelf) as a control. I revisited the loaves on Saturday, slicing each to see whether they were still sandwich-worthy or only fit for toast, and noting mould spots, then came to a final verdict the next Wednesday. After two days the control loaf, left on the shelf, was staler than the bin-protected bread, but toastable. By the end of the week the control was dehydrated to a brick-like hardness but without a trace of mould. Containers, it turns out, preserve moisture (good) but can encourage mould to take hold. So, the trick was to find storage that balanced humidity with air circulation, keeping the bread moist and mould free. My takeaway: once it survives the first night, a loaf kept in the right bin can be good for days.



Joseph Joseph bread bin with bamboo lid

£60, josephjoseph.com

★★★★☆

First impressions A generous-sized bin (18x37x22cm) with a retro design and easily grabbed handle, plus a bamboo lid that flips over to become a grooved bread board.
Saturday The crust felt slightly dried out, but was still OK for sandwiches once sliced.
Wednesday With just a couple of spots on the crust, the loaf was dry but toast-worthy.
Verdict Best-looking.



Typhoon Living Otto bread bin

£32, dunelm.com

★★★★☆

First impressions Curvy, ribbed carbon steel tin (20x13x21cm) in a fetching dark blue. The bamboo lid was the only one in the test with an airtight seal.
Saturday The bread was moist and still fine for sandwiches.
Wednesday Slightly dried out, but it had numerous spots of mould. Not appetising.
Verdict A good price for designer looks.



Salter Kuro Collection large bread bin

£22.99, salter.com

★★★★☆

First impressions A matt black receptacle with impressive capacity (33x18x23cm). The steel bin swallowed four of my 800g loaves.
Saturday Sliced, the loaf was almost as fresh as when I bought it.
Wednesday The loaf was speckled with mould, but still springy.
Verdict Best for a kitchen with ample counter space.



Mason Cash loaf storage tins

£29.99, lakeland.co.uk

★★★☆☆

First impressions These vintage-style nesting tins are narrow enough to sit on the pantry shelf, and attractive enough to make a pretty worktop display.
Saturday The crust of the loaf was barely dried and the slices were perfectly sandwich-worthy.
Wednesday The loaf was among the spottiest, but still seemed moist.
Verdict Best for smaller spaces.




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With luxury design, a range of exceptional amenity spaces and access to some of London's top cultural attractions, Riverstone is offering a fresh take on retirement living and creating vibrant communities in the capital - exclusively for people over 65.

While retirement can mean leaving the city for the countryside, the coast, or the suburbs, many residents choose Riverstone because they love living in a cultural area, are keen to 'right size' their property, and enjoy living in an environment with so many local highlights.

Deciding to move to Riverstone has never been easier. With two prime locations, offering 1, 2 and 3-bedroom apartments for sale - take your pick between the culture and elegance of Kensington, or the riverside tranquility of Fulham.



Join the Club

New residents will automatically join our members' community, The Riverstone Club. Residents regularly invite friends and family to enjoy the wealth of amenities on offer. Whether that's for a relaxing spa day using the Pool, Steam Room and Sauna, a pamper session in the Hair and Nail Salon, watching a film in the Private Cinema with the grandchildren, honing your drive in the Golf Simulator, challenging neighbours to a game in the Club Room, or catching up with friends over lattes in the Espresso Bar... the choice is yours.

Edward Young, General Manager at Riverstone Fulham said, *"it has been wonderful to see and meet more families of residents over the summer; from enjoying the Pool with their relatives who live here, and often taking the opportunity to book the guest apartment for a stay, which is another benefit for our residents to ensure they can accommodate visitors. We continue to welcome more new residents, and their extended families, into our community. Residents have enjoyed an eventful season of garden parties, enchanting installations at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show and an RHS exhibition at Saatchi Gallery - all part of The Riverstone Club."*

Riverstone has a range of exciting partnerships with some of the UK's top arts and cultural institutions including, Royal Albert Hall, English National Opera, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, and Glyndebourne Opera Festival, and residents have access to exclusive events with special guest speakers. There are also many groups and in-house activities such as Book Club, Gardening Club, Bridge and Coffee Mornings.

City living with so much on the doorstep

Riverstone Kensington, our flagship destination, is within easy reach of the best in culture, restaurants, and green spaces, including Kensington High Street, Sloane Square, Olympia new redevelopment, Holland Park and more.

Riverstone Fulham sits right on the coveted Thames Path, with views stretching to Chelsea Harbour Pier and beyond. The perfect area to enjoy a stroll along the river or a boat trip to the recently regenerated Battersea Power Station. With easy connection to Central London, residents can also make the most of what's on offer in the capital. Both residences have delightful private gardens designed by acclaimed landscape designer, Andy Sturgeon, and abundant herb gardens by Jekka McVicar VMH, that residents enjoy all year round.

Dine with us

Maria G's, our all-day brasserie style Restaurant and Bar, is open to the wider community, serving seasonal produce and classic favourites, such as delicious burrata and heirloom tomato salad, roasted pollock with wilted spinach, and sirloin steak with truffled chips and Café de Paris butter. With large terraces overlooking the gardens in Kensington or the Thames in Fulham, it's the ideal location for a meal with loved ones.



Your health in expert hands

The importance of physical and mental fitness is fundamental to life at Riverstone. With a proactive approach to health and wellbeing, a dedicated team works with residents to better understand their wellbeing goals. From exercise classes to bespoke workouts and personal training, Riverstone tailors programmes just for you, incorporating the Swimming Pool, Exercise Studio and state-of-the-art Gym equipment.

For everything else, Riverstone offers wider health support through selected expert partners and care through The Good Care Group.

Meet the team, speak to residents, and find out more about life at Riverstone. Come and take a tour of the stunning residences and show apartments.



To book your viewing, call 020 8017 6166,
email enquiries@riverstoneliving.com, or visit www.riverstoneliving.com.
Prices start from £785,000*

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COMING SOON - Cambs Great Shelford; **Cheshire** Handforth; **Devon** Barnstaple, Honiton, Totnes; **Essex** Saffron Walden; **Hants** Drayton, Fareham; **Kent** Gravesend, Tenterden, Staplehurst, Westwood Cross; **Northants** Brackley; **Notts** Beeston; **Oxfordshire** Banbury, Bicester, Didcot; **Somerset** Wells; **Surrey** Cranleigh; **Sussex** Bexhill-on-Sea; **Wirral** West Kirby; **Worcestershire** Evesham; **Yorkshire** Wigginton.

AWAITING PLANNING - Berks Hungerford; **Bristol** Staple Hill; **Bucks** Newport Pagnell; **Cambs** St Neots; **Cheshire** Penketh, Wilmslow; **Devon** Exmouth; **Dorset** Christchurch, Shaftesbury; **Essex** Old Harlow; **Hants** Romsey; **Herts** Hertford; **Kent** Canterbury, Larkfield, Tonbridge; **Leicestershire** Oadby; **Somerset** Street; **Suffolk** Felixstowe; **Sussex** Southwater; **West Midlands** Aldridge, Kingswinford.

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